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TITLE

ORGANISATIONAL CULTURES, PATRIARCHAL CLOSURE AND WOMEN MANAGERS:

In what ways do organisational cultures act as a means of patriarchal closure to exclude and/or marginalise women managers?

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ABSTRACT

This research investigates the gendered aspects of organisational culture. Empirical studies of two organisations, both with distinctive divisional cultures were undertaken. Employing and extending the Weberian concept of social closure, I ask whether, and to what extent, different organisational cultures act as means of social closure to exclude and/or marginalise women managers. I design a research typology for studying gender and culture, consisting of gender awareness, management style, time management, public/private divide, informal socialising, and sexuality. I draw on several different theories of power to explain hierarchical gender relations in organisations. I found that a Weberian concept of legal rational authority is still relevant to organisational life, particularly leadership. The concept of discourse, as meaning what may be said at any one time, proved useful, particularly in illuminating the public/private divide. I argue that a concept of patriarchy is still vital for a feminist analysis of organisations and Gramsci's concept of hegemony helps explain why women are seemingly complicit in their own oppression. The research highlights the importance of an adequate definition of orgnisational culture in order to identify its exclusionary characteristics. Different constituents of culture may act to exclude women in different ways and in different areas, even where a strong equal opportunities policy exists. Key findings include the prevalence of sexual harassment even at senior levels and in 'feminised' areas of work; the positive impact of a non-heterosexual culture on gender relations, and the importance of business demands on management style. At senior levels, long hours, informal socialising, management style, and the acceptance of a public/private divide act in combination or separately to marginalise and exclude women. Whilst women managers fare better in an equal opportunities organisation, men's resistance to women in organisations becomes more subtle as overt discrimination is outlawed.

Author's Declaration

I declare that the work contained in this thesis is all my own work, conducted without the assistance of others. The views expressed in the thesis are those of the author and not of the University.

Sarah Rutherford

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ORGANISATIONAL CULTURES, PATRIARCHAL CLOSURE AND WOMEN MANAGERS:

In what ways do organisational cultures act as a means of patriarchal closure to exclude and/or marginalise women managers?

INTRODUCTION TO THESIS

This thesis investigates gender and organisational culture using a feminist theoretical framework. My research question asks in what ways do organisational cultures marginalise and/or exclude women managers? I argue that organisational culture may be conceptualised as a means of patriarchal closure, and act as a patriarchal exclusionary strategy. This study builds on the work of theorists who maintain that there are patriarchal interests at work as well as capitalist ones (Hartmann 1979; Walby 1990; Witz 1992) and that patriarchal exclusionary practices have marginalised and excluded women from areas of employment (Walby 1986; Witz 1992; Bagguley 1991). Some writers also noted that informal as well as formal barriers acted to prevent women's progress (Bradley 1998; Bagguley 1991) in organisations. I aim to conceptualise culture as another means of exclusion and show how it excludes and/or marginalises women managers in certain work situations.

Twenty five years after the first equality legislation in Britain, only a handful of women have reached the top in their organisations and professions. A growing body of literature has sought to investigate women's experiences in organisations and explain why they remain for the most part below the intractible barrier of the glass ceiling (Kanter 1977b; Coyle 1993; Marshall 1984, 1994; Tanton 1994; Davidson and Burke 1994; Podmore and Spencer 1986; Firth-Cozens and West 1991). At the

same time sociologists interested in gender began to investigate the gendered aspects of organisations (Ferguson 1984; Pringle 1989; Mills and Tancred 1992; Acker 1990; Savage and Witz 1991; Hearn and Parkin 1987; Hearn, Sheppard, Tancred-Sheriff and Burrell 1989).

Gender, work and organisation has emerged as a distinct field of study, attracting writers from a huge range of disciplines. Consultants and trainers, management and business academics, psychologists, organisational psychologists, educationalists, geographers, anthropologists, sociologists and social workers have all contributed to the literature. From this body of work culture has emerged as a key concept in understanding gender and organisation, although as yet it is still undertheorised (Harlow and Hearn 1995).

While the women in management literature is often neglectful of theory (Green and Cassell 1996), its research based material has produced some interesting accounts of life for women managers in organisations [1] and has provided evidence of the role of organisational culture as an important obstacle for women in management (Marshall 1984, 1995; Coe 1992; Hammond 1994; Still 1993; Corcoran-Nantes and Roberts 1993; Green and Cassell 1996; Thomas 1996).

There has been a mushrooming of interest in culture and gender and several writers have begun to theorise the concepts (Hearn 1992a,1993a; Still 1994; Collinson and Hearn 1994; Harlow and Hearn 1995; Gherardi 1995; Itzin 1995; Maddock and

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[1] See for example *Women in Management : A Developing Presence* edited by Morgan Tanton 1994; *Women in Organisations: Challenging Gender Politics* edited by Sue Ledwith and Fiona Colgan 1996; *Making Gender Work : Managing Equal Opportunities* edited by Jenny Shaw and Diane Perrons 1995

Parkin 1993, 1995; Marshall 1993). There seemed also to be a need for more empirical research.

> Little work has been put into identifying the values and attitudes, accepted codes and patterns of behaviour at various levels of management within organisations and industries. If change is to occur, the cultural dimensions that prevent women from reaching the top need to be identified. (Still 1994 p.9)

My research then is an attempt to identify the cultural dimensions that prevent women reaching the top. Kanter's classic *Men and Women of the Corporation* (1977b) showed the importance of cultural practices in the career of managers and detailed many of the rites and rituals of life at Insco. Cynthia Cockburn was one of the first to identify the importance of cultural practices and resistance to equal opportunities in organisations (1991) and link these directly with the behaviour of men, and I see my research as further exploring some of the issues she raises in her book. I contend that organisational culture has exclusionary characteristics which need to be identified and that the exclusion acts to protect male (patriarchal) interests in organisations. The concept of organisational culture is rarely discussed in the women in management literature and I aim to define it for this research.

Organisational Culture

References to a prevailing male culture seemed too vague for theory and certainly too vague for empirical research and so I have tried to define the constituents of organisational culture which have a direct or indirect impact on women in management. I drew on organisational culture literature to develop an understanding of what is meant by an organisational culture for the purpose of operationalisation. There are a multitude of different definitions for a researcher to draw on. I wanted to

identify exactly which aspects of a 'male' culture were inhibiting the progress of women managers and where this varied in different workplaces. The definition I drew on most was that of Strati, as used by Gherardi (1995).

> An organisational culture consists of the symbols, beliefs and patterns of behaviour learned, produced and created by the people who devote their energies and labour to the life of an organisation. It is expressed in the design of the organisation and of work, in the artefacts and services that the organisation produces, in the architecture of its premises, in the technologies that it employs, in its ceremonials of encounter and meeting, in the temporal structuring of organisational courses of action, in the quality and conditions of its working life, in the ideologies of work, in the corporate philosophy, in the jargon, lifestyle and physical appearance of the organisation members. (Strati 1992 pp.1-2 Szell Concise Encyclopedia)

Missing from this definition of Strati's is the background of the industry, the ownership, size, history and geographical location of the organisation i.e. influences not reducible to employees' values or beliefs, but it is wide reaching in its inclusion of behaviour and beliefs. I think that the background and physical artefacts of an organisation are also important in assessing the culture. For the purposes of my research on gender I define organisational culture as consisting of the symbols, beliefs and patterns of behaviour of organisational members. It is articulated through the management style, work philosophies, dress, physical artefacts, informal socialising and temporal structuring of work, and in the gender awareness and expression of sexuality. I break down organisational culture in order to operationalise it into the following constituents.

1 Gender Awareness This constituent refers to the level of awareness that exists in the organisations around issues of gender. One indicator is the existence of an equal opportunities policy; another is the thoughts and feelings of the women who work

there; another is the thoughts of men on women managers. Gender awareness or lack of it pervades the culture.

2 Management Style I use the term management style to denote the manner in which business is done. This relates to how decisions are made, how they are communicated, whether there is a clear hierarchy, whether people work in teams or individualistically, what work attributes are rewarded .For some writers management style is the sum total of culture (Handy 1985), but for my purposes it is one constituent.

3 Time Management This constituent is now widely recognised to exist as part of an organisation's culture in the form of long hours and it is this aspect of time management to which I refer.

4 Public/Private Divide This constituent reflects the extent to which the organisation acknowledges and accommodates work down at home, whether the private is brought into the public and vice versa.

5 Informal Socialising This constituent of culture is readily identifiable but hard to capture in research. It refers to the informal ways employees may socialise with each other and their clients, as well as the networking and politics which often help further people's progress in organisations.

6 Sexuality Sexuality is one major theme to have come out of the work on gender and organisation and I include it here as a constituent of culture. I keep sexual harassment and sexualised culture theoretically separate, also insisting on a strict theoretical distinction between sexuality and gender, arguing that one does not

necessarily define the other. This proves very important for my findings in the light of a high number of homosexuals in one of my research areas.

I chose to look specifically at divisional cultures, sometimes called subcultures, following the work of Crompton and Le Feuvre (1991), Savage (1992), Savage and Halford (1995), Podmore and Spencer (1987) which explore the ways in which women are often 'bunched' up in particular areas of organisations. What was the influence of these different divisional cultures on women managers? Were the cultures in any way responsible for why women worked in some areas and not others?

Whilst not rejecting other discriminatory practices like recruitment, restructuring as well as unequal pay, my focus was entirely on culture, which I define in a very broad way. My view is that culture may act in particular situations as one means of exclusion among many. I certainly came across one or two women in the bank who knew they were not being paid as much as some of their male colleagues, but my research did not intend to cover this. Nor did it specifically cover issues of race and ethnicity although race discrimination was an openly acknowledged problem in the airline, and for one of the few Asian women I met was more of an issue than gender. I acknowledge this dimension which affects both men and women.

<u>Theoretical concepts</u>

I aim to bring out the more exclusionary aspects of culture. Power hovers behind any form of exclusion and concepts of power are for the most part missing in the literature on gender and organisational culture. I develop theories of power which I think are useful for my analysis. I argue that Weber's legal/rational power in organisations is still relevant for an organisational study. I utilise and develop his

concept of closure which refers to the ways in which status groups close off areas of work to outsider groups. Closure is the key concept in my broad theoretical frame and I aim to show that organisational culture can be conceptualised as a means of closure. I also discuss Foucault 's theory of power and find the concept of discourse useful in my analysis if it is restricted to what may be said at any particular time, or as Linstead and Grafton-Small suggest, 'regulated systems of statements which have both ideational content and implication for social practice' (1992 p348). I propose to conceptualise discourse as distinct from structure.

Another key concept is patriarchy, a system which allows men to dominate women, and I defend the usefulness of this concept for feminist research. I disagree that the concept implies a uniformity among women. I accept that my sample of women managers may be an elitist group, who may even have more in common with their male peer group than non-managerial women employed in the organisations. However, my aim is to pinpoint aspects of the culture which hinders them specifically because they are women.

Hegemony is another concept I use to explain the many instances where women accept unquestioningly cultures which act against their interests. Hegemony was developed from the Marxist concept of ideology and designates a process whereby cultural authority is negotiated and contested. It describes the ways in which dominant discourses come into being, and avoids the zero sum approach to power that turns women into passive victims. It does however offer a better theoretical tool than Foucault's view of power and resistance occurring only through discourse, in that it allows for the existence of a dominant group, which is important for a feminist analysis and particularly in the explanation of exclusion. Pre-discursive relations are a vital part of my theory.

Case studies

My two case studies were at the opposite ends of the spectrum in terms of awareness of equality issues. The first had a well developed equal opportunities policy, with targets set for women managers and a strong public image. The second had no equal opportunities policy at all despite employing many more women over the past twenty years. Obviously there are limits to my study - interviewing women who were not yet managers may have been helpful but time and resources prevented me doing this. My data provided very little on the subject of race and it was not an issue I explored with my white interviewees. There were some Asian women managers in the airline whose comments I have included in the analysis and race was an issue with which the new chief executive had recently become involved. Also there are other aspects of organisational culture I may have neglected.

Here is a short resume of each chapter. Each chapter contains some more theory and literature relevant to the specific topic, followed by a short description of the methods used, followed by the data, which I then refer back to the theoretical debates.

Chapter One Theory

In this chapter I discuss the theoretical framework for my research. I give an overview of the recent literature on organisational culture and discuss some of the theories on gender and organisational culture.

Chapter Two Methods

My methods chapter discusses feminist methods and methods of researching organisational culture. The constituents of culture above form the basis of my interviews and questionnaires. The background to the companies is discussed in this

chapter as are some of the visual artefacts. Also included in the methods chapter is the choice of methods, access, ethics and a discussion of the research process, the operationalisation of concepts into mix of methods, questionnaire development, interviews and observation.

Chapter Three Gender Awareness

This chapter takes an overall look at how the organisations and their employees perceive women managers. I take equal opportunities policies as an indicator of gender awareness and set out some of the current debates and trends before analysing their application in one case study and their neglect in the second case study. Other indicators of gender awareness I use here are women's own thoughts on how their organisations view them and whether they think the culture encourages women to pursue their careers. How men in the organisations view women managers and stereotypes of women are assessed to show the gender awareness in both case studies. The chapter aims to ask whether a high degree of gender awareness in the culture helps women progress and a low degree acts to exclude them.

Chapter Four Managerial Style

The first part discusses the context for a debate on management style. I take some of the organisational culture literature and use it to put in context the debate on women's style of management - the same/different debate. I discuss some of the masculinity of management literature, and its relevance to the study of gender and organisations and provide evidence of the different emotions at work. My results show that business function is an important determinant of management style as is leadership and seniority. I discuss the implications of women's own sense of managing differently and compare the two very different organisational findings.

Chapter Five Time Management

This chapter explores the 'long hours culture' and tries to place it in a theoretical context. I examine my own data for evidence that time is used as a means of excluding women. I look at the divisional differences of hours worked and differences according to seniority .

Chapter Six Public/Private Divide

This chapter covers the debate over the meaning of work and the concept of the ideal worker being a man (Acker 1990). It looks at the erosion of the boundaries between public and private and the implications of this are for women. I ask whether the dual burden is acknowledged, accommodated, accepted or ignored by the organisations. My findings suggest that home is losing out to the pull of the workplace but I argue against Hochschild's contention that women do not want to spend more time at home (1997).

Chapter Seven Informal Socialising

Research has shown that informal networks may be instrumental in furthering careers and that women's exclusion from them prohibits their progress (Coe 1992; Rogers 1990; Halford 1993). I discuss some of the more frequent forms of informal socialising, like drinks after work, corporate entertainment, and playing sports and try to use data to show which forms are important in what area and whether women participate to the same degree as men. The old boy network, although difficult to reveal, remains a barrier to women and men who may not be from the same background or class.

Chapter Eight Sexuality

This chapter explores the sexualised aspects of the organisations and looks at evidence of sexual harassment. I argue against prioritising sexuality in an investigation of gender in organisations, as I believe that women are already over-sexualised in everyday discourse. I show that it is predominantly men's sexuality which pervades the work environment, both heterosexual and in one case homosexual. I also argue that use of sexualised language contributes to an anti-female culture and may put women off from that area of work. Where the work environment is relatively unsexualised individual sexual harassment is just as likely to take place. I argue against the Foucauldian approach of resistance through sexuality (Butler 1990; Pringle 1989) as my data shows that women managers make every effort to manage their sexuality in order to ward off men's unwanted attention, which may detract from their professional status.

Chapter Nine Conclusion

I draw conclusions from all the data and conclude that culture does act as a means of patriarchal closure in specific ways. I discuss the usefulness of conceptualising gender and culture in this way and conclude on the importance of the different concepts of power at play in organisations.

CHAPTER ONE

THEORETICAL CONCEPTS

INTRODUCTION

Analysis of the concept of culture in organisation provides another tool for the theorist interested in the gender dimension of employment and organisational theory. It brings the whole field of informal relations at work out into the open, illuminating the ways in which women in management may be excluded at work.

> A cultural analysis moves us in the direction of questioning taken for granted assumptions raising issues of context and meaning and bringing to the surface underlying values. (Smircich 1983 p.354)

Identifying cultures as merely gendered or, indeed, as male is inadequate for a thorough analysis of the relationship between organisational culture and gender. It is important to identify what we mean by the culture we are writing about and, for this the substantial volume of work on organisational culture from the fields of management studies, organisation studies and anthropology, is helpful.

ORGANISATIONAL CULTURE

Many authors writing on women in management use the concept of organisational culture without any attempt to define what they mean by it thus leaving it to the readers' interpretation (Coe 1991; Hammond 1993; Rigg and Sparrow 1994; Lewis 1997; Rubin 1997) or they import definitions from management writers without further discussion (Pemberton 1995, Itzin 1995). Its meaning, definition and impact

on organisations has, however, been thoroughly discussed in the managerial literature (Schein 1985, 1992; Handy 1985; Blomberg 1987; Denison 1990; Sackmann 1990, 1997; Trice and Beyer 1984, 1993; Brown 1995) although these works have on the whole neglected its theoretical underpinnings. None of the influential texts on organisational and corporate culture (Peters and Waterman 1982; Deal and Kennedy 1982; Handy 1985; Schein 1985; Trompenaars 1993; Hampden-Turner 1990) include any specific discussion of gender in their analyses yet the management literature is of use to this researcher because of its practical help in identifying which aspects of organisational life make up its culture. The less managerially orientated academic community has had its own reasons for researching organisational culture and its contribution will be discussed below. For the purposes of my research, I found the management literature most helpful for the operationalisation of the concept of organisational culture.

Origins and development of the concept of organisational culture

Organisational researchers have been investigating the informal side of organisational life since the Hawthorne Studies first made their impact in the nineteen forties and fifties (Mayo 1949) and the vast literature on organisational culture has evolved concurrently with the equally large and still burgeoning literature on human resources management. Taken together they represent a refocusing on people in organisations as the means by which "sustainable competitive advantage can be achieved" (Brown 1995 p.2). As the quote suggests most studies of human behaviour in organisations that emerged have been top down, with the agenda derived from senior managers for whom problems existed on the shop floor. The development of the culture concept then has also been a management led phenomenon. It was not until the late seventies that the concept of corporate culture

was given any serious attention. Anxiety about the future of Western dominated capitalism turned management writers' attention to the phenomenal success of the Japanese corporation and reasons behind it, which they attributed to its culture. Often without regard to the particular history, geography and economy of the country, management writers began to promote the theory that a strong corporate culture was a pre-requisite to success or 'excellence' in any company (Peters and Waterman 1982; Ouchi 1981; Deal and Kennedy 1982). These observations have been enormously influential in management and, in spite of its managerial bias, the literature is interesting for its attempts to define culture and for its practically based research.

Other academic writers on organisational theory embraced the concept of organisational culture as a response to the growing unease with mainstream functionalist approaches to organisational theory. The culture concept allowed for a new dimension in management studies.

> This new awareness focuses attention upon the symbolic, the qualitative, the sensuous aspects of human relationships and upon the central place of these qualities in the operation of organisations. (Turner 1990 p.67)

Models of culture were taken mostly from anthropology, which boasted its own plethora of definitions, and then applied to organisations. The wisdom of importing one concept from one discipline into another without any allowance for the different situation has been strongly criticised (Meek 1988; Smircich 1983; Wright 1994; Willmott 1995; Jeffcutt 1993; Grint 1995). Influenced by organisational sociology (Ouchi and Wilkins 1985) and anthropology (Geertz 1973; Douglas 1987), but developed mainly within the managerialist influenced organisational studies and organisational psychology schools and now debated in many other disciplines, it is

not surprising that there is little coherence in either meaning or approach to the concept of culture or its research.

> the most salient weak points of organisational culture research may well be the lack of theoretical consistency and poor empirical underpinning. (Alvesson and Berg 1992 p.45)

One source of confusion surrounds the terms used by culture theorists - corporate culture and organisational culture. The terms are often used interchangeably but the literature reveals that corporate culture is usually thought of in narrower terms than organisational culture. Corporate culture pertains to the management led company values and attitudes imposed on employees through a myriad of ways like mission statements and target goals and is always tied to business needs. Organisational culture is a much wider concept than corporate culture, embracing all aspects of organisational life, including corporate culture. Part of the reason for the lack of clarity of the culture concept is because one set of writers, usually managerial, are only referring to corporate culture whereas another set, say, the interpretative school of sociologists and anthropologists are looking at the much more comprehensive concept of organisational culture. I think it is helpful to specify to which term you refer. My focus for this study is on organisational culture.

Limits to managerialist approaches to organisational culture

I identify, following some of Newman's points (1995), some common assumptions made by writers in the management field, which have led to criticism from both within and outside the discipline.

Firstly, management writers have treated organisational culture as an integrated whole. It is now more widely recognised that organisations may be made up of many

cultures, divisional, professional, functional, employee, management. Writers are now including the concept of subcultures in their analyses (Blomberg 1987; Watson 1990; Maddock and Parkin 1993; Anthony 1990).

> Although the tone of a company organisational culture is usually set by corporate management, individual departments develop their own local cultures reflecting the complexity of the web of power relations between employees. (Maddock and Parkin 1993 p.26)

In my study on gender and organisational culture differentiated subcultures are crucial for a comparison of different areas of the organisations which may have different impacts on women managers and may or may not account for the different distribution of women throughout the organisation.

Secondly, following on from the above assumption of an integrated culture is the assumption that culture is seen as a site of consensus. There has been widespread debate over this issue as the very notion of 'shared values, beliefs and assumptions' has been critiqued. Meek (1988) saw the danger of reducing culture to a collective consciousness of the organisations that is owned and available for manipulation by management and questioned the assumption that culture is a unifying force. Some writers say that by focusing on the consensus aspect of culture, the conflicts and resistance that occur within organisations are overlooked (Martin 1993).

Thirdly, traditional management texts treat culture as static. In the management literature culture is depicted as a passive field waiting for managers to act on it. This makes it difficult to explore the dynamic qualities of cultural change and the tensions these produce. Cultural barriers to women are very much more fluid and flexible

than the image of glass ceiling portrays. Seeing culture as a process is important as it allows us to see that people are involved in the making of culture.

> People do not just passively absorb meanings and symbols; they produce and reproduce cultures and in the process of reproducing it, they may transform it. (Meek 1988 p.201)

> While people are working they are not just producing goods and services, pay packets and careers, they are also producing culture. (Cockburn 1991 p.134)

This view of culture as active is important for the development of my theory, which hypothesises culture as a means of exclusion and closure.

Fourthly, management writers have tended to view culture as something an organisation has, as a distinct set of attributes or characteristics (Smircich 1983). This gives rise to the notion that culture is one variable in the hands of management and can be modified at their whim (Anthony 1990). As Willmott puts it

> the guiding aim and abiding concern of corporate culturism as I characterised it is to win the hearts and minds of employees. (Willmott 1993 p.532)

Smircich (1983) criticised this variable approach which she saw as managerial and functionalist and instead promoted the approach of taking organisational culture as a root metaphor, by thinking of organisational culture as something an organisation is not as something it has.

Culture Change

More articles over the past twenty years have been written on culture change than on any other aspect of culture, reflecting the prevailing management view that management of culture and its manipulation is possible. Yet, as countless culture change programmes failed, management writers began to see that culture was more complex than a mere management variable (Sackmann 1997; Dawson 1990; Brown 1995). However, it has to be acknowledged that, despite criticism as to its feasibility, organisations do embark on culture change programmes, perhaps taking more care to include the thoughts and attitudes of employees, and sometimes it works.[1] Meek notes that viewing culture as a root metaphor, and thus not subject to unilateral manipulation, is not intended to deny that some are in a better position than others to attempt to intentionally influence aspect of it (Meek 1988 p.469), and Legge (1995) concurs arguing that

> given shared understandings in industrial organisations about the meaning of hierarchy, it is likely that (senior management's voices) will be more audible and influential than those of subordinate employees. (Legge 1995 p.108)

Managing culture is still considered part of management's agenda and indeed work on equality issues in organisations has shown that it is management involvement and support that is the key to success (Hammond 1993; Newman 1995; Maddock and Parkin 1993). The recurring theme then in much of the criticism of the literature on organisational culture is the charge that it has been colonised by management and made into another management tool (Jeffcutt 1993; Meek 1988; Smircich 1983;

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[1] Allied Dunbar , Hambro Life , Shell , Cadburys , British Airways , ICI are but a few of the many companies that have successfully changed their culture.

Anthony 1990; Willmott 1993; Coleman 1990). And further research studies may not help, because

> it appears to be more a rule than an exception that the researcher has gained access to his data in his role as a consultant rather than as a researcher.(Alvesson and Berg 1992 p.50)

Cultural perspectives - interpretative / symbolic approaches

> When culture is a root metaphor, the researcher's attention shifts from concerns about what do organisations accomplish and how may they accomplish it more efficiently, to how is organisation accomplished and what does it mean to be organised. (Smircich 1983 p.353)

The metaphor approach, outlined by Smircich, became very popular with academics who saw it as a way out of the mainline rationalist managerial stream and it gave birth to a whole field of interpretative and symbolic studies of organisational culture (Turner 1990; Gagliardi 1990; Smircich 1983; Smircich and Calás 1987; Alvesson 1993; Alvesson and Berg 1992; Gherardi 1995). They are distinctive by their employment of qualitative research methods in the 'field' (Jones et al 1987; Sackmann 1997) and their translation of key interpretative texts (such as Geertz 1973) from the broad field described as 'human sciences' (Marcus and Fisher 1986). Organisational writers who thought that they were breaking out of the rational managerial paradigm by investigating culture in an interpretative fashion have also been criticised by postmodernists as management centric (Jeffcutt 1989, 1990; Linstead and Grafton Small 1992). The interpreter is in a privileged position in the production of knowledge and may suppress indigenous voices.

The dualism between the approaches to organisational culture (culture as a variable or organisation as culture) has been consolidated by writers stacking up on one side or another thus creating a gulf that may not really exist. I agree with the postmodernists who also question the usefulness of an either/or approach instead of both/and (Jeffcutt 1993). By suppressing the other, both sides manage to circumnavigate the substance of long standing debate over these issues in fields such as social anthropology (Jeffcutt 1993).

Postmodern path

Postmodernism is itself a contested term. It was originally used to describe developments in the field of architecture and subsequently taken up in a wide range of areas, philosophy, social theory, social criticism and arts. It is often used interchangeably with poststructuralism, which refers specifically to theories which criticised the structuralist movement in literary criticism, arguing that language can be interpreted in different ways. Founding poststructuralist theories include Derrida's theory of *difference*, and Foucault's theory of discourse and power. These theories themselves are often referred to as postmodern. Weedon accepts that the conflation of the two terms has become a fact of contemporary feminist debate (Weedon 1997 p.180). In organisation studies, the term most used is postmodern.

Jeffcutt (1993) argues that both mainstream discourses of organisational culture and symbolism discourses generated by researchers can be understood as fundamentally totalising and modernising for the understanding of organisation. For him and other postmodernists 'reality' is not separated from its reconstitution and the world we know is the world as represented. 'Reality' or 'truth ' are an effect and not an absolute position, an outcome of a particular reading of the privileged orderings of a text by

an author. The postmodern path offers a plethora of new approaches to the study of organisations (Travers 1993; Linstead and Grafton-Small 1992; Linstead 1993; Burrell 1988,1993). Unlike an interpretive approach a pure postmodern approach treats cultural phenomena and symbols 'in their own right' and not necessarily connected in time, in space or logically to an underlying grand narrative or even any kind of coherent system of meaning (Alvesson and Berg 1992). The original intentions of the creator of the symbols are not important. The links between symbols and their meaning is not merely ambiguous, it is arbitrary. However, the role of the researcher can never be arbitrary. Foucault's aim of distancing the intellectual from the subject he/she is writing or theorising about, was to sever the moral link between the theorist and the theorised. However, for what reason are we as researchers looking at the culture of organisations? It is rarely a random chance encounter. In some ways this distancing of the intellectual/researcher from the topic they research takes us back to the uninvolved, neutral, objective enlightenment researcher that has been found wanting. This is not to advocate a relativism. As researchers we are implicated in what we research - after all Foucault himself studied prisons and mental asylums and sexuality out of personal choice, presumably an interest - but this doesn't mean that we cannot endeavour to be objective in what we report. Thompson points out that

> Just when organisational analysis was beginning to discover the relationship between its traditional domain and the wider world, we are encouraged to retreat into the text. (Thompson 1992 p.202)

Linstead and Grafton-Small (1992), drawing on the work of Derrida, argue for formulating organisational culture in a number of ways; as paradox, otherness, seduction and discourse. Whilst it may be appropriate to see multiple discourses as existing within a particular organisational culture, I think an emphasis on otherness

actually heightens its subordination to structure, a dualism which postmodernism aims to transcend. The postmodern enthusiasm for culture is surely because a focus on structure is harder to 'play' with and material conditions harder to define as seduction. Alvesson and Berg conclude that a postmodernist approach leads to theoretical relativity and extreme methodological subjectivism. But they want to use postmodernism to deconstruct meaning and question taken for granted or given assumptions about the world and then replace them by genuine reasoning, a kind of strict reflexivity.

> reasoning here is the logical discourse in which we are not only responsible for what we say but also for making sure that others understand what we say. (Alvesson and Berg 1994 p.254)

This, in the end, doesn't sound very different from any self-reflexive modernist analysis. I dismiss Jeffcutt's calls for 'pure' postmodern approach as my theoretical stance insists on some connection between the doer/ speaker and the deed/word, and the separation of culture from structure.

Culture as practice

Much of the debate in wider social theory concerning cultural analysis has been over the definition, and whether culture should include actual behaviour or whether it should consist of what is left when everything that is scientifically verifiable has been removed. This creates yet another false dichotomy given that belief and behaviour are bound to be interlinked, and stems from the enlightenment tradition of privileging humans for their possession of reason, and elevating the mind over matter. Culture, whose origins were in based in the earth (Latin - colere , to tend or to care for something, cultura, cultivate, horticulture, agriculture), was transformed

into ideologically based assumptions, and made the repository of everything non material and of high value - "he is a cultured man". The point of going back to the root of the word is to emphasise that culture is a common practice not a common set of ideas. During its adoption into organisational theory, culture has frequently become somewhat divorced from practice and becomes instead 'shared meanings' 'values, assumptions, beliefs', residing in the minds of employees and thus loses the boundary characteristics that were reflected in the original use of the word - both culture regarding the earth, and culture as a measure of people's status.

> Regarding culture as an observable aspect of human behaviour lays emphasis on the realities of symbolic boundaries. Not only do they exist as conceptual distinctions in persons minds, they are publicly visible in the manner in which social interaction occurs, in discourse and in tangible objects, resources are expended in creating and maintaining them and many social activities may be understood as efforts to shorten eroded boundaries, to redefine cultural distinctions or as symptoms of ambiguous frameworks. Identifying these activities is a concrete task to which cultural analysis can be applied. (Wuthnow et al 1984 p.246)

Although some of the writers on culture give passing reference to the origins of the word (Pheysey 1993), most quickly move on to the narrower concept of a common set of norms or beliefs (Hofstede 1980). An emphasis on culture as practice, as what people do as well as their values and beliefs, enables us to see its role in boundary marking and exclusion and leads to the theoretical possibility of conceptualising culture as closure. It also ensures that culture cannot be solely confined to discourses, which I define as being limited to parametered ways of knowing and speaking about a subject.

Culture as exclusionary

Most of the organisational culture literature refers to the inclusionary nature of culture yet its function is also exclusionary. I briefly mentioned the boundary characteristics of culture above. This concept has been used with regard to class cultures and national cultures but little with regard to organisational cultures. Boundaries have been of great importance in social anthropology, separating the sacred from the profane (Durkheim 1961) or the clean from the polluted (Douglas 1966). I want to highlight this aspect of organisational culture in my research. Grint says that

> What is important is the way culture is constructed as a boundary device to mark off insiders from outsiders; the privileged from the unprivileged; men from women; and 'us' from 'them'. Culture in this sense is largely if not mainly about distinguishing one group from another on the basis of where the boundary lies, culture is an exclusionary mechanism as well as an inclusive one. (Grint 1995 p.166)

Grint notes the usefulness of this boundary approach to culture in discussing subcultures of organisations where boundary devices are constructed to keep the 'other' out and through this exclusionary practice to formulate the identity of those within. This notion is extremely useful to me in helping to conceptualise culture as an active exclusionary concept. Organisational culture has been cited as a barrier to women in management (Hammond and Holton 1991; Coe 1991; Still 1994; Thomas 1996) but its exclusionary characteristics have not specifically been analysed. Yet there are examples of its exclusionary nature in the corporate culture literature.

> The exclusion of women and minorities form the rich and supportive life of an organisation's culture begins the day they walk in the door. Most don't even know it's happening to them. (Deal and Kennedy 1982 p.67)

The focus here is on the exclusionary characteristics of organisational culture, only to act as a counter to the prevailing view of organisational culture being inclusionary. It obviously includes members whilst it excludes others. Women managers may be included in some aspects of an organisation's culture and excluded from others at the same time. Divisional cultures and hierarchical cultures may draw boundaries to exclude others within organisations. Acknowledging the exclusionary aspect of organisational culture enables us to see it perhaps as active resistance to women's equality.

My approach

One advantage of this fractured field of theory outlined above is that a researcher may in some sense forge his/her own path through the morass of definitions and approaches. The neglect of gender in most of the mainstream organisational culture material means casting the net wider than is done in the culture field. My brief was not to make yet another once and for all definition of organisational culture, but I needed some definition for the purposes of the research. Drawing on Strati (1992), I think that organisational culture consists of the symbols, beliefs and patterns of behaviour of organisational members. It is expressed in the management style, work philosophies, language and communication, dress, physical artefacts, informal socialising and temporal structuring of work, and in the gender awareness and expresssion of sexuality. The list is not exhaustive and to some extent the researcher's interest will determine which consitituents of culture will be the focus of study. I wanted to concentrate on the gendered (direct and indirect) characteristics of organisational culture.

I drew heavily on the managerialist writing for influences on culture like leadership (Schein 1985, 1992), and managerial style and type of business (Handy 1985). I drew on Brown (1995) for an extensive list of cultural constituents, and on the symbolist writing, (Gagliardi 1990; Turner 1990) for artefacts and buildings. I have looked closely at some of the debates in the women in management literature and discussed them within the context of organisational culture. For instance I treat the public/private divide as a constituent of an organisation's culture and it has its own chapter. I discuss the sameness/difference debate with relevance to management style, and the equal opportunities debates are considered within the overall context of gender awareness. Sexual harassment is discussed within a wider framework of debates around sexuality in organisations. From these wide sources I drew up a list of cultural constituents to be researched.

Gender Awareness.

Management Style.

Time Management.

Public/Private Divide.

Informal Socialising.

Sexuality.

I also discuss and, I hope, show how power is an integral part of organisational life, something often neglected by writers on organisational culture. I want to emphasise the link between organisational culture and society, particularly with regard to gender relations. The literature too often treats its topic as existing in a vacuum yet it directly relates to the culture of wider society and this relationship is rarely discussed (Schein 1985). And I contend that culture is practice and that those who have most access to resources are most likely to determine the dominating culture.

Little of the mainstream work on organisational culture, either managerial or interpretive or postmodern, specifically includes any consideration of gender. I now turn to examine some of the literature that has recently been written on gender and organisational culture. It is noteworthy that this developing body of work is being undertaken by a completely different set of writers from those authors discussed in this section who write more generally on organisational culture.[2]

GENDER AND ORGANISATIONAL CULTURE

Introduction

I want to focus on the potentially exclusionary aspects of organisational culture on women managers and this requires connecting feminist theory with the work on organisational culture. Many feminist academics have noted the existence of cultural barriers in their analyses of specific organisations.[3] Other writers have concentrated their efforts on decoding organisational culture for its genderness and have explored different approaches of problematising gendered cultures (Newman and Itzin 1995; Harlow and Hearn 1996). Sue Maddock and Di Parkin (1993) were among the first to produce a typology of gender cultures. Catherine Itzin (1995) identifies characteristics of a gender culture that she found in her research. There have been other attempts to theorise gender and organisational culture (Ramsay and Parker 1991; Hearn 1993; Collinson and Hearn 1994; Marshall 1993; Gherardi 1994, 1995; Alvesson and Due Billing 1994; Harlow and Hearn 1995; McDowell 1997). I shall critique some of these theories and argue that the concept of social closure is a

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[2]Exceptions here are Smircich and Calás (1992), and Martin (1993)

[3]Sophie Watson on the Civil Service (1990); S.Lewis on family friendly issues (1996); F.Colgan and F.Tomlinson on publishing (1996); Amanda Martin Palmer on HM Customs and Excise (1996); Sylvia Wyatt and Caroline Langridge on the NHS, (1996); Anne Brockbank and Joanna Traves on retailing (1996); Linda Martin on local government (1994). Some writers discuss culture in relation to a particular organisational issue (e.g. Alimo - Metcalfe on leadership (1994); Jennifer Rubin on performance assessment (1997).

useful way of looking at how patriarchal cultural practices in organisations prevent women reaching places of power. It captures both the active nature of organisational culture and links it to the behaviour of members of the organisation and allows for the concept of power.

Interpretative routes to culture and gender -Alvesson and Due Billing and Gherardi

Alvesson and Due Billing (1992) attempt to develop a theory which incorporates discrimination into organisational cultures by showing the gender symbolism of various functions, professions and positions. Using gender as a metaphor, they ask whether it can supply organisational theory with new ideas and a richer understanding of male domination of organisational phenomena. They want to stress the differences between organisations when it comes to discrimination and bias to 'maleness' (p.77) and explore the possibility of different cultures at different levels and positions, which is an important aspect for my research. They argue that authors who have tackled the issue of gender and organisational culture have assumed that all cultures have similar features, saying that to call a culture male is inadequate, with which I agree.

Their study of three different organisations showed that gender relations differed drastically and that these patterns reflected, as well as influenced, the overall culture and work climate. They use the concept of gender symbolism to grasp the phenomenon of gendering of jobs, and argue that types of work symbolise different genders. They then contend that the culture of an organisation is read from symbols and that gender symbols are included in these. They conclude that the stronger the male symbolism, the greater the disadvantage for women without attempting to say

why this should be or to link up any connection between power and gender. Their work is useful in showing the complexity and differences in gendered organisational cultures but ultimately I found their conceptual terms, metaphors, symbols and gender images somewhat confusing. Their research lacks an adequate concept of power which I think is important for a feminist analysis.

Following the interpretive, symbolic approach (Turner 1990; Gagliardi 1990), Silvia Gherardi provides fascinating evidence of the gendered nature of organisational cultures (1994, 1995). The symbolic approach treats organisations as cultural artefacts and looks not at the structures but at the 'texture of organising'. She analyses the ways in which men and women do gender and work and suggests ways we may do it differently. Drawing on the symbolic order of gender (Jung 1944), Gherardi develops a theory that gender can only be defined 'by default', since what we attribute to one gender is implicitly denied by the other. She says that the meaning of gender is constantly deferred and negotiated in discourse while we simultaneously acknowledge the deep symbolic order of gender. Thus she sees the way we 'do gender' at work as helping to diminish or increase the inequality of the sexes.

> We use ceremonial work to recognise the difference of gender and remedial work socially to construct the 'fairness' of gender relationships.(Gherardi 1994 p.599)

She argues that gender is located at the level of interactional and institutional behaviour (the gender we do) and also at the level of deep and trans-psychic symbolic structures (the gender we think). The latter, she says, has greater stability - is this similar to Mitchell locating patriarchy in the psyche? (Mitchell 1979). She argues that women entering the male working place feel they must be discreet, and

'take their place' in segregated jobs, that they collaborate with men to render the female presence feminine, discreet and almost invisible. She calls this remedial work because the symbolic order has been broken.

Her examples are interesting and useful because they show the subtlety of cultures and the ways in which men and women interact in accordance with it, like managerial women wearing their hair short, without consciously attributing their behaviour to following organisational rules. Whilst acknowledging the importance of the private/public order as a problematic divide for women entering the workplace, I suggest that it is also the hierarchical gender order of dominant /subordinate that is particularly challenged when women enter management and professions.

High context and low context - Marshall's approach

In her article on the resilience of organisational cultures to women managers Marshall (1993), breaks down organisational culture into high context and low context - terms borrowed from Hall (1976), an anthropologist, and uses these two concepts to explain the resistance of culture. She views cultures as resilient to any change (Frost et al 1985), although many culture change advocates would dispute this. In my view Marshall imbues culture with too much relative autonomy.

> Culture, however, is powerful, demanding and difficult for individuals to resist. (Marshall 1993 p.317)

She states that culture's ability to disarm successive women entrants reinforces its power and perceived inviolability. Marshall calls masculine organisational cultures

'high context', where interpretation relies on deeply ingrained, largely unconscious, shared frameworks for understanding. Women do not share this 'contexting' and are therefore marginalised. Marshall states that

> We can then depict women as operating with low-context approaches in men's high context spaces.(Marshall 1993 p.319)

She notes how most women managers try to fit into the prevailing culture (Sheppard 1989; Loden 1985), yet even when they do adapt and behave exactly like their male counterparts, "they are still not perceived in the same light" (Loden 1985 p.38). Marshall puts this down to the resilience of the culture. Cockburn would say it was the resistance by men (1991). In discussing change, Marshall argues that the opposition is not men but

> systems of culture, long engrained, carried largely unconsciously, but threatening to disturb because they carry resolutions of existential dilemmas which have become habitual. (Marshall 1993 p.320)

Her research observations are interesting but I think that her theoretical approach to gender and organisational culture fails to adequately incorporate power issues and links with wider society.

Culture Typologies

Some writers have attempted to go beyond calling the culture male and try to identify some different types of gendered cultures. Readily identifiable to all who have worked in organisations I found the approaches very helpful for my research project. The first, Maddock and Parkin's six point typology has been very influential (1993). Disregarding any theory on the meaning of culture, their typology was developed purely from their work as equal opportunity consultants in the field of

local government and a hospital. They describe six gender cultures which their research with women in the organisations show to inhibit and marginalise them. These are the gentleman's club, the barrack yard, the locker room, the gender blind, the feminist pretenders and the smart macho.

These gender cultures are all in fact male cultures and are certainly recognisable in most organisations. Collinson and Hearn (1994) identify five different masculinities which they believe are central to the exercise of male power in organisations. These masculinities are similar to the gender cultures identified by Maddock and Parkin. Collinson and Hearn link the five discourses of masculinity with different managerial styles: authoritarianism, paternalism, entrepreneurialims, informalism and careerism. The theme running through all these masculinities is the importance of the workplace to men's identities. In another paper (1993a) Hearn illuminates the ways in which these different masculinities may characterise particular organisational cultures.

Directly drawing on a famous piece of work by Smircich (1983) in which she categorises the various theories on organisational culture, Harlow and Hearn discuss how gender may be interpreted in this typology (1995). They also relate gender to Linstead and Grafton-Small's discussion of culture as text, otherness, paradox, seduction and discourse (1992).

The above works represent examples of the developing body of work on gender and organisational culture, revealing its complexity and providing pointers for future research and theorising. I aim to add to this literature by breaking down the concept of organisational culture further and linking in some theories of power.

POWER

Introduction

Power is one of the central topics of sociological thought and theory. I have not the space for a detailed overview of all the different theories of power but I focus on aspects of those which I think help in an analysis of gender and organisational culture. Power has been neglected in many accounts of gender and organisational culture and I knew it would be a key concept in my research. In the end, my choice of theoretical framework emerged during the course of the study and I decided to draw on more than one theory of power to explain the various findings of my research. Kathy Davis acknowledges that different theories may suit different types of research (1988), choosing Giddens' concept of power to be the most fitting for her research on women patients and GP's, and Aafke Komter combines Lukes' three dimensional concept of power with Gramsci's concept of hegemony in her research on married couples (1988). I shall show the limits of one kind of theory over another with reference to the data together with some concluding points of power in my final chapter. Firstly, I give a brief overview of the concepts of power as applied in organisations together with my comments on their usefulness for my research.

Modernist theories of power

The modernist tradition of theorising power stems from the work of Marx and Weber which focuses on conflicts of interests and addresses the ways in which power becomes embedded in organisational structures in ways which serves certain, but not all, interest groups (Hardy and Clegg 1996). For Marx, power was in the hands of those who had economic control within a society. The source of

power lies in the economic infrastructure and in modern societies the means of production are owned by the ruling class. This relation to the means of production provides the basis of its dominance and ideology is the non-coercive, cultural means of maintaining power.

> The ruling ideas are nothing more than the ideal expression of the dominant material relationships, the dominant material relationships grasped as ideas. (Marx 1846)[4]

The importance of ideology was highlighted by later Marxist thinkers (Lenin 1947; Lukács 1963; Poulantzas 1973; Gramsci 1979) and Gramsci's notion of hegemony is a concept I find useful in my analysis and one which I discuss further below. The word ideology is now recognised in everyday language and can be understood as being a much broader concept than the original Marxist term (Layder 1997). It does however retain a reference to the rationalisation and facilitation of relations of power and control (Layder 1997). Ideologies are those ideas and beliefs which serve a particular group's interests. I use the word in this 'weaker' sense.

Weber's view of power was much broader than that of Marx and not solely tied to the ownership of capital, although it still involved a unilateral movement of power from those who have it on to those who do not. Weber defined power as

> the probability that an actor within a social relationship will be in a position to carry out his own will despite resistance, regardless of the basis on which this probability rests. (Weber 1947 p.152)

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[4] The German Ideology ed C J Arthur Lawrence and Wishart 1970 .

Weber argued that power could not be determined solely by the ownership or non ownership of the means of production but could also be derived from the knowledge of operations. In his work Weber identified three sources of authority, charismatic, traditional and rational-legal authority, with the last being the most ideal type of power for bureaucratic organisations. There is an automatic expectation that leaders will motivate others toward attainment of objectives and they are imbued with power. Other members who can command more of an organisation's resources like bringing something from outside into the group, or who have access to inner circles and who make decisions are also powerful. Weber allows for some discretion and agency on the part of workers to use power, regardless of whether they own the means of production or not. Power here is theorised as linked to the purposive action of individuals, requiring human agency and is conceptualised as an asymmetrical relationship. I think that certain aspects of power in organisations can best be perceived in this way. Leaders, because of their status, do have power over their employees in a way that Foucault's theory cannot account for. Lukes' radical view of power is also tied to human agency (1974). In Lukes' three dimensional theory of power, his third dimension focuses attention on the mechanisms which perpetuate the status quo, which is similar to Gramsci's concept of hegemony (1971). Lukes describes a system of normative and cultural assumptions which legitimate a structure of power relations. Power is most effective when issues of conflict do not arise at all, when people remain unaware of their possible claims. Lukes said that power could be used to prevent conflict by shaping

> people's perceptions, cognitions and preferences in such a way that they accept their role in the existing order of things, either because they can see or imagine no alternative to it, or because they view it as natural and unchangeable or because they value it as divinely ordained and beneficial.(Lukes 1974 p.24)

I prefer the original concept of hegemony to describe the ways in which people are complicit in their domination.

Foucauldian view of power

I will now turn to Foucault whose theories on power have had enormous influence on feminist work. Some feminist organisational writers have turned to a Foucauldian view of power to illuminate gender relations in organisations (Ferguson 1984; Pringle 1989; Kondo 1990; Kerfoot and Knights 1996). I want to outline some of the strengths and weaknesses of aspects of Foucault's theories as I see them and explain why I use, in a limited sense, his concept of discourse without embracing other further-reaching aspects of his theory. I suggest that feminism is an emancipatory movement which has its foundations in modernist notions of progress and liberation (Balbus 1987). It is based on the value judgement that the oppression of women is morally wrong. Foucauldian theory on its own cannot accord feminism the priority it needs to be meaningful political movement. (Ramazanoglu 1993; Bordo 1990, 1993). Below I discuss both some of the productive aspects of Foucault's theory of power, together with the difficulties and limits for feminism. I illustrate these strengths and weaknesses in the work of feminists who have adopted a Foucauldian analysis in their work.

Foucault does not see power as something people possess and others do not.

> Power must be analysed as something which circulates or rather as something which only functions in the form of a chain. It is never localised here or there, never in anybody's hands, never appropriated as a commodity or piece of wealth. (Foucault, 1980 p.98)[5]

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[5] Taken from Selected Interviews and Other Writings 1972-1977, (1980) ed C.Gordon Brighton : Harvester .

This has appealed to feminists who find the zero sum approach of powerful/powerless depressing and unrealistic. Foucault does not see power as uni-directional, directed from outside or above - as in the traditional view that power flows from those above who have it to those below who do not. He sees disciplinary power as invested in, transmitted by and reproduced through all human beings in their day to day existence. Minute and diffuse power relations exist always in tension and always in action. Power then is not possessed by individuals, groups or functions, but always in relationship. Foucault frees power from its historic tie to structural interests and brings it down to the level of individuals. This resonates with many people who have always felt that power is present in all relationships and not just the economic ones. There are power struggles in emotional relationships, in families, with friends and in organisations which are just too subtle to be theorised as conflict.

The limits though for a feminist analysis of power in organisations are obvious. By breaking away from structure altogether and ascribing power solely to discourse, Foucault loses the material effects of structural power on subjects. It is hard to account for one group's domination of others without seeing power as something people possess. However we describe the patterns of power, men as a group have always had more power than women. Foucault also deals inadequately with the human subject which I discuss later.

Discourse

The accepted use of the word discourse is evidence of how much Foucault's thought has seeped into our everyday understanding of the world, although there is by no means a universal understanding attached to its use. Some restrict it to its traditional meaning of speech or written texts, whilst others use it to mean what may be said

about a particular subject at any one time, consciously or unconsciously drawing on a Foucauldian understanding of the concept.

> "Discourses are historically specific, socially situated, signifying practices. They are the communicating frames in which speakers interact by exchanging speech acts" (Fraser 1992 p.61)

Foucault uses the concept of discourse in place of structures and ideology. Discourses are structured ways of knowing, which collapse ontologically with practices and indeed at times with structures.

> Discourses are not purely linguistic phenomena, but are always shot through with power and are institutionalised as practices. (Ransom 1993 p.123)

> Thus discourse, or a particular discursive formation is to be understood as an amalgam of material practices and forms of knowledge linked together in a non contingent relation. (McNay 1994 p.108)

This inclusion of the material into discourses was Foucault's way of bypassing the dualism of material/ideology (McNay 1994 p.109). Foucault rejected the concept of ideology because it is bound up with true and false ideas. I think it is worth holding on to some concept of ideology, particularly if we want to retain a notion of hegemony.

For Foucault power is located solely within discourses. There is no point outside of discourse from which a fair decision can be made or in which power can reside. This ontological priority that Foucault accords discourse is problematic for feminism (Soper 1993). The existence of a multitude of discourses does little to explain how and why men and women are situated in unequal positions vis a vis discourse.

Subjects differently located in different discourses are able to resist and resistance produces alternative forms of power saturated knowledges. This twinning of power with resistance has made Foucault's theory attractive to feminists who see spaces for resistance by producing alternative feminist discourses (Ferguson 1984; Pringle 1989; Butler 1990; Weedon 1987, 1997).

> We must not imagine a world of discourse divided between accepted discourse and excluded discourse, or between the dominant discourse and the dominated one; but as a multiplicity of discursive elements that can come into play in various strategies. Discourse transmits and produces power; it reinforces it, but also undermines and exposes it, renders it fragile and makes it possible to thwart it. (Foucault 1984 p.100)

The concept of multiple co-existing discourses is an extremely useful one for social analysis. It may be appropriate to describe certain aspects of culture as discourses, but not all because I include behaviours in my concept of organisational culture. For example, if seating arrangements in a canteen are part of an organisation's culture, which I think they are, I would not describe them as a discourse. Whilst recognising the power of discourse, in that it shapes what people may have to say about a subject at a given time, I want to keep it apart from structure and also retain a hold on other different concepts of power. I would argue for some autonomy of social structures for, although systems and structures have been developed over time by human agency, they are not identical to it. Locating all structure within discourse loses any inequalities and hierarchies that may exist. As I later develop an argument for the concept of patriarchy this aspect of structural power is vital.

<u>Feminist use of Foucauldian theory in organisations</u>

In her fascinating research on part time women workers in a Japanese organisation, Dorinne Kondo uses a Foucauldian analytic approach to show how the women had

> carved out a powerful effective informal space within the symbolic center of the factory (Kondo 1990 p.258)

But their strategy relied on discourses at their disposal, possessing obvious structural limits. Here the Foucauldian concept of power fails to take her further and Kondo acknowledges materially embedded power which is not "subject to shifting multiple points of contestation" and she ends rather pessimistically with the view that perhaps, "they and we will never be able completely to dismantle the master's house" (Kondo 1990 p.259).

Pringle adopts the Foucauldian view of power in her research on secretaries because of its ability to incorporate the subtleties of exchanges of power

> Male power is not simply and unilaterally imposed on women - gender relations a process involving strategies and counter strategies of power. (Pringle 1988 p.92)

She emphasises the possibilities of resistance to power through the subversion of discourses, particularly the discourse of sexuality.

> Power operates a lot more effectively when it operates around patterns of desire and pleasure, when it is not experienced as power at all, or where its exercise is enjoyed by both parties.(Pringle 1994 p.118)

Yet Pringle acknowledges that this very desire and pleasure is defined for women by men. It seems impossible to see the overturning of the boss-secretary discourse whilst the material factors which determine their unequal relationship - money, status, responsibility etc. remain intact. Indeed Pringle does accept a notion of structural inequalities, which a pure poststructuralist approach would not allow.

The concept of discourse can be used effectively by critical or feminist researchers who seek to comment on the social processes which constitute structures of oppression (Burman and Parker 1993), but we also need to recognise pre-discursive power relations. By using the concept of discourse in an overall feminist materialist framework I am following the approach of other writers (Fraser 1992; Davies 1997; Potter and Wetherell 1987; Francis 1998)

The Human Subject

Layder (1997) has suggested that whilst emphasising power at the level of everyday practices, Foucault's neglect of the human subject means that his theory is actually inadequate for face to face encounters. His everyday practices are more about reproduced features of social life and not with the interpersonal dynamics of situated conduct. The Foucauldian subject is understood without a clear concept of agency.

> Let us not therefore ask why certain people want to dominate, what they seek, what is their overall strategy. Let us ask, instead, how things work at the level of ongoing subjugation, at the level of those continuous and uninterrupted processes, which subject our bodies, govern our gestures, dictate our behaviours etc. (Foucault 1980 p.39).

The first problem here, then, is that feminists have always wanted to ask the question of why some men want to dominate and to analyse the strategies of domination as have other analysts of all kinds of oppressive regimes. The concept of agency is denied in Foucault's work because he sees no connection between the intention of a subject and their subsequent action. The basis of enlightenment and liberalism is the rational thinking self - the objective seeker of knowledge. In his quest to distance himself from the enlightenment project and the rational objective subject, Foucault

had to forsake the concept of agency. Instead of taking a thinking human subject for granted, Foucault only asks the question of how that particular self is constituted within particular discourses.

> I believe that there is no sovereign founding subject, a universal form of subject to be found everywhere. I am very sceptical of this view of the subject .....I believe, on the contrary, that the subject is constituted through practices of subjection, or, in a more autonomous way, through practices of liberation, of liberty. (Foucault 1988 p.56)[6]

His desire to avoid explanations at the level of the subject, or groups of subjects, means that we have no signifiers of discontent, unhappiness, anger, and human agency ultimately gets lost in the constitution of the subject solely through discourse (Fraser 1991; Thompson and Ackroyd 1996).

Subjects are reduced to physical bodies which are shaped and reshaped by different warring forces acting upon them. They are constituted through discourse and there is no interiority or inner truth of the subject. This has been criticised as an impoverished view of humanity (Layder 1997) and one which is inadequate in explaining human action and behaviour.

Despite insisting on the means of resistance, there remains for Foucault no category around which a notion of active agency may be formulated. I believe that agency is vital for all human beings, however flawed the connection between consciousness and action may be. I reject the notion that human subjects are constituted exclusively through discourse although they may be influenced by their location in a particular

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[6] Politics , Philosophy, Culture : Interviews and Other Writings 1977- 1984 ed L.Kritzman (London: Routledge 1988)

discourse or exposure to certain discourses. Weedon adopts a poststructuralist view of the subject saying

> discourses are more than ways of thinking, and producing meaning. They constitute the 'nature' of the body, unconscious and conscious mind and emotional life of the subjects they seek to govern. (Weedon 1987 p.108)

and she argues that subjects still have agency

> Although the subject ...is socially constructed in discursive practices, she none the less exists as a thinking, feeling and social subject and agent, capable of resistance and innovations produced out of the clash between contradictory subject positions and practices. (Weedon 1987 p.125)

This rather seems to be like having your cake and eating it, a transcendent subject still lurks behind the discourses, able to resist at will.

In her book *Gender Trouble*, Butler also argues that agency is not the product of performed will, or any pre-discursive mechanism, but an 'act': it is the product of the citational effects of discourse, the same discourses that produce the subject enable her to resist.

> There is no possibility of agency or reality outside of the discursive practices that give those terms the intelligibility that they have.(Butler 1990 p.148)

Butler can be criticised for this void left in the place of human agency (Matisons 1998). Does anything exist within human psyches that is not merely caused by various discourses? In her later work Butler returned to develop the 'subjective' side of her theory. She still defends the deconstruction of the subject, saying

> The critique of the subject is not a negation or repudiation of the subject, but, rather a way of interrogating its construction as a pre-given or foundationalist premise. (Butler 1994 p.9)

Butler says the subject is constituted but not determined, and that we need to inquire into agency's construction.

> To take the subject as a political problematic is not the same as doing away with the subject. (Butler 1994 p.15)

She argues in *Bodies That Matter* (1993) that 'agency' is not the intentional conscious activity of an original will, but the symptomatic effect of regulation and its lack of effect. She says that people are still speaking so that the death of that old subject is not the death of agency, but we must be cautious as to how subjects are formed - and it is often by exclusion. One of the ways that domination works, she suggests, is through the regulation and production of subjects. I take Butler's point about who and who is not allowed to be subjects but she is talking here about being a subject in civil society, in the way that Carole Pateman (1988) has discussed the exclusion of women as human subjects, not about the individual's sense of self and subjectivity. Indeed much of Butler's argument hinges around discussion of the law and its repressive and exclusionary tendencies. Repressed, excluded and marginalised people may consider themselves as strong subjects through family, religious or national ties. Patricia Hill Collins [7] has commented that black women who have been victims of violence perceive themselves as strong because they stay to hold the family together, whereas white society may class them as weak victims.

To say that the subject is constituted solely through discourses fails to explain human interaction and the psychic and identity issues that are involved. It has led to

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[7]Patricia Hill Collins speaking at BSA Conference in York, April 1997.

the notion of people moving around at random, acquiring this and that characteristic, and fails to account for structural inequalities and emotional and psychic developments of the individual. We need to account for the difference in individuals whereby some are more powerful than others. Some of the postmodernist project appears to me to be a crisis of faith in humanity following the loss of the Enlightenment subject. I think we have to accept that there is at some level a link between the doer i.e. the thinking subject and what is said or done, without deconstructing so much that the deed under analysis is forgotten. I think it does matter who is speaking.

It is the emphasis on individual relations which makes Foucault 's theory attractive to feminism. However, the body has merely replaced the old modernist subject.Whilst analysis of the body has provided us with many insights into the ways discourses may act on bodies and the descriptions of the physicality and materiality of bodies have provided a richness and a reality that the old uniform enlightenment subject was unable to do, there remains a stubborn gap as to what is going on in the minds of these bodies. Having banished the rational objective subject which was revealed to be white middle class western male, what do we put in its place? Do human beings have any notions of justice, fairness a sense of goodness or are they merely moral vacuums? Sociologists are now beginning to fill these 'bodies' with mental characteristics as well as physical ones. [8] Whilst the body acted to anchor discourse to some sense of materiality, even biology, it has proved to be an empty concept for sociology without some aspect of human agency.

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[8]Principled Positions: Postmodernism and the Rediscovery of Values, edited by Judith Squires, a political scientist is an example of this genre. At the recent BSA conference on the Body there was a recurring theme for introducing a 'weaker' subject - Casey , Connell, using terms like shared humanity, reasoning, consciousness, to introduce human agency back into the body without which human life makes no sense.

Weberian notion of power

In her ground breaking study, *Men and Women of the Corporation*, Rosabeth Moss Kanter (1977b) applies a Weberian notion of power as well as accepting the Weberian gender neutral ideal of bureaucracy. For her, then, women's discrimination or subordination in organisations is merely because they are not in positions of power. Her analysis argues that women's problems in large organisations are consequences of their structural placement, crowded in dead end jobs at the bottom and exposed as tokens at the top. She sees male domination as being irrational and places hope that once women enter places of power all will be well. For her the job makes the person and power wipes out sex. So it is power differences not gender differences which explain the different corporate experiences and fortunes of men and women in the corporation which she describes so well. Weber's notion of bureaucracy was designed to erase personal abuse of power. Kanter's study shows the importance of both formal and informal power for members of an organisation. Dexter (1985) argues that managers need formal power and status as well as informal power (based on the interaction with others). It is the latter which is hard, she says, for women to gain and often the formal power comes as acknowledgement of the informal

> Behaviours associated with the exercise of power, the structure of interpersonal relationships and culture in bureaucratic organisations differ from those women learn as a result of their primary socialisation. (Dexter 1985 p.239)

Kanter disagrees with this saying that there is no evidence that there are sex differences in leadership or style and she argues that a preference for men as leaders is simply a preference for power. Men have power in the organisation and women do not because they do not have access to the same opportunities for power and

efficacy through activities and alliances (Kanter 1977b p.200). This exclusion, though, is for Kanter based on their difference from the dominant group and not because they are women. She fails to see the ongoing process of exclusion as a material practice and also fails to tie in the concept of power within the organisation to the power that men hold in relation to women outside the organisation. She locates the power in the position which waits for the arrival of women. Acknowledging that by seeing power as something you have or have not women's powerlessness may appear pessimistic, she tries to argue for a hopeful outcome in which

> ...situations can be modified. The net of rewards and constraints can be rewoven. New tools can be provided. The people who are stuck can be offered challenges and the powerless can be given more discretion, more influence over decisions. Tokens can be provided with allies. (Kanter 1977a p.11)

It is not clear why men should suddenly change and help women climb up the organisational ladder. When women do break into areas of male work in numbers we see the feminisation of the work, with men often leaving and taking the power with them. Kanter's study remains one of the most thorough empirical work of gender relations in an organisation. My own findings resonate with much of her own data although my interpretation of them is different. I would not dismiss a Weberian view of hierarchical power in organisations, which provides a more realistic picture than Foucault is able to do, in explaining the power of leadership. However, this view of power in organisations is not, in itself, adequate to explain women's inferior positions in organisations. The failure to acknowledge a more far reaching male power, which I call patriarchy, as well as inadequate attention to informal power as it is played out between people means that further concepts of power are required.

PATRIARCHY

Organisations reflect the values of wider society and organisational theory, including much of the women in management literature has been guilty of analysing organisations as if they existed in a goldfish bowl. Wolff recognised that limits set by organisational life was insufficient to explain women's position in organisations

> The constraints operating on women in organisations originate not merely in the organisations themselves but in society, (and by way of example), within the perspective of organisation theory, we can see how long hours and inflexible working time mitigate against the employment of women with 'two roles' but we cannot discuss the basic question of why women have two roles.(Wolff 1977 p.20)

And fifteen years ago Hearn and Parkin said

> It is the ubiquity of male power that suggests an analysis of patriarchy is necessary to appreciate the nature of authority and power in organisations. (Hearn and Parkin 1983 p.91)

Patriarchy, like all grand theories has come under relentless attack but I argue to include the concept in my research because organisational problems cannot be adequately grasped without an appreciation of wider gender relations. Patriarchy is an example of a type of power that exists on a system or structural level which a Foucauldian analysis disallows. Feminist and feminist informed research needs to acknowledge the prevalence of male power in the lives of all women, whatever their differences. Both within and outside organisations, more men have more power in terms of access to resources and the ability to control these resources than do women. This is not to neglect the very real material differences in both men's and women's lives. I certainly take the point made by Billing and Alvesson that women

managers may have more in common with male managers than with women at the bottom of the organisation (Billing and Alvesson 1994) and Pollert's assertion that working class women may sometimes have more in common with working class men than with middle class women (Pollert 1996).

Looking at the evidence of world wide domination of women by men in a multitude of different forms I think it appropriate to name this as patriarchy, and to see its impact on the micro level of everyday gender relations in an organisation. Some concept of patriarchy is hard to keep out of any analysis of gender in society. Although poststructuralists may want to expunge it as another irrelevant grand narrative, a glance through most of the literature on organisations and gender shows that its existence is often assumed in through phrases like patriarchal processes or patriarchal discourses (Pringle 1989; Ferguson 1984; Gherardi 1995; Witz 1992; Halford and Savage 1997; Hearn and Parkin 1993). Some writers self consciously use the concept and discuss its inclusion (Cockburn 1991; Burris 1996; Itzin 1995). Walby's definition of patriarchy, which she also now calls gender regime (1997), is still the most popular

> as a system of social structures and practices in which men dominate, oppress and exploit women. (Walby 1990 p.20)

Patriarchy then can be used to explain the persistence of men's domination over women. Ramazanoglu describes it as

> a concept used to attempt to grasp the mechanisms by which men in general manage to dominate women in general. It refers to ideas and practices ranging from the most intimate of sexual encounters to most general economic and ideological factors. (Ramazanoglu 1989 p.34)

It is its ability to encompass such broad ranging examples of female oppression like girl child murder in China and female circumcision in Africa as well as pornography, sexual abuse, domestic violence and exploitation at work, which continues to give it the appeal which Pollert finds so surprising (1996). Male domination does not readily cover these forms of oppression (and besides it has no adjective - patriarchal is used far more by writers than patriarchy to signal the interests of men). As Mann (1986) has pointed out, how many sociological generalisations spread out over 4000 years of global history can do even half as well? The concept of patriarchy has been criticised by some feminists on the grounds that it appears fixed and unchanging (Barrett 1980; Rowbotham 1981) and ahistorical and universalistic (Bradley 1989; Pollert 1996). However these charges have, in my view, been adequately answered by detailed analyses of how and why patriarchy has changed over time (Cockburn 1985, 1991; Walby 1986, 1990, 1997). Walby allows for these changes by locating patriarchy within six structures - state, household, employment, sexuality, violence and culture - and this allows for shifts from one location to another (1990, 1997). Walby's research, indicating a shift from private patriarchy to public patriarchy, has had wide reaching influence and is particularly applicable to the study of organisations. Bradley more recently has suggested that it is legitimate to speak of patriarchal relations in reference to gender differences (1996 p.94). The continued use of the adjective, as though it had a separate meaning from its noun, illustrates how reluctant feminists are to do away with it altogether.

Pollert (1996) is concerned that the use of the term discourages men to change and lends itself to a fatalistic acceptance of its own inevitability and she prefers to use gender relations. But the alternative phrase 'gender relations' does not signify male dominance, nor does 'gender regime' as the word patriarchy does. Although, at a systems or structural level, patriarchal domination means that more men as a group

have access to positions and resources of power than women as a group do, this doesn't mean that individual power relations between men and women can be understood simply as a mirror image of the systematic aspects of patriarchal domination. To accept that some women may have more power than some men does not mean that patriarchy does not exist, if we accept the concept of power at a systems/structural level as well as at an individual level.

HEGEMONY

The word hegemony, and more frequently hegemonic, can be found scattered throughout the work on gender and organisations, by poststructuralist and modernist writers alike - hegemonic cultures, hegemonic masculinities, etc. yet its meaning is rarely defined nor its usage explained.[9] Terms like hegemonic discourse and hegemonic masculinities are used to convey the idea of a prevailing or dominant discourse, yet its original meaning is more than this and in its original sense it can be a useful tool in feminist analysis. Although the concept was developed for a general theory of society and social change with the workplace as one component, hegemony has been used by certain organisational theorists to explain why workers who are exploited have not necessarily acted in their own interests (Burawoy 1979; Clegg 1989).

Hegemony designates a process wherein cultural authority is negotiated and contested. It describes the processes by which dominant ideologies come into being and are accepted as 'normal' and commonsense. Whilst the dominant group/s

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[9]Exceptions to this are Cynthia Cockburn's discussion of hegemony in In The Way of Women (1991), and Nancy Fraser's discussion in her article The Uses and Abuses of French Discourse Theories (1992). Dutch sociologist Aafke Komter uses the concept to illustrate the hidden aspects of power in her research on marriage (1989) .

retain overall power it may have to make concessions to other subordinate groups, and this accommodation of other interests into the dominant groups' interests is a key part of hegemony. The concept was developed by Antonio Gramsci, the Italian Marxist, in the 1920s. His concern was the way in which the ruling class was together able to produce a social and cultural environment in which capitalist relations of exploitation appeared quite normal and acceptable to ordinary people. This explains why coercive force is not always necessary for a dominant group to continue to rule. It also explains why force is necessary in any uprising where hegemony has not been achieved by the dominant group.

> The hegemony of a political class meant for Gramsci that one class had succeeded in persuading the other classes of society to accept its own moral, political and cultural values. If the ruling class is successful then this will involve the minimum use of force as was the case with the successful liberal regimes of the 19th century (Joll 1977 p. 99).

The hegemonic system works through pervading commonsense and becoming an ordinary way of seeing the world, understanding one's self and experiencing needs. Such a situation always makes possible a gap between that inscribed by the dominant order and that which a dominated group would have preferred. One of the key aspects of hegemony is that, once established, cultural authority may be perpetuated through institutional means like the media, law, religion, yet the dominant group will always make concessions to other groups up to a point. This provides a more sophisticated view of power relations, not dissimilar to Foucault's concept of power and resistance, but retaining the concept of dominant and differentiatedly powerful groups. Hegemony illustrates how situations which are obviously in the interests of a dominant group are accepted as normal by subordinated groups. Turning to gender relations we may ask why it is that women

accept the burden of housework, even when both partners work? Why do women who are sexually harassed not report it and feel as if they have done something wrong? Why do women blame prostitutes for prostitution rather than the men that use them? How can it be that young women today fail to recognise that their relative freedom has been won through the struggles and efforts of feminists? Moreover, these young women denounce this feminism as being irrelevant to their lives. Most women I met in organisational life accepted the difficulties they faced as if they were unchangeable facts of life. They accepted the view that men and women were different and that to get on in a man's world they had to adapt. They were not forced to accept this belief for, as Dorothy Smith says

> At the interpersonal level it is not a conspiracy among men that they impose on women it is a complementary social process between women and men. Women are complicit in the social practices of their silence. (Smith 1987 p.34)

Patriarchy, then, viewed as the ruling class, establishes hegemony which accommodates some of women's interests but which overall acts in men's interests. For instance patriarchal culture may now accommodate the concept of working women, and men taking part in childcare, but it still refuses and rejects feminism because feminism demands too radical a change and redistribution of power. It is patriarchal ideology which successfully sustains, through changing times, hegemonic control of our culture. Accepting the concept of hegemony does not mean that ideology directly reflects the economic but it does mean that it reflects the interests of a particular group.

GENDER SEGREGATION, EXCLUSION STRATEGIES AND SOCIAL CLOSURE

Gender Segregation

The centrality of occupational sex segregation to analyses of gender relations in paid employment is now widely recognised (Hakim 1979). Segregation is both horizontal, where women and men work in different jobs, and vertical where women work at lower levels in the hierarchy (Hakim 1979). Horizontal segregation is maintained by the recruitment of men and women to different jobs, vertical segregation by either differential recruitment or the confining of women to lower grades within internal labour markets.

The persistence of occupational segregation and the consequent sex stereotyping of jobs and crowding is an important factor when considering women making inroads into traditional male jobs. Paul Bagguley considers it necessary to further define segregation by distinguishing between industrial, functional and hierarchical dimensions (Bagguley 1991). This is a useful distinction when analysing the development of 'feminised' areas of work in management and the professions.

Whereas it is the nature of capitalism to seek out cheap labour there is evidence, historical and contemporary, that workers and employers have colluded to protect male workers' status and pay to the detriment of women and capital (Walby 1986; Cockburn 1983; Crompton and Sanderson 1991). Barriers to training and formal bars to the professional bodies excluded women from prestigious male jobs, and Walby noted the segregation strategies pursued by the unions when exclusion strategies had failed (Walby 1986). Now more subtle forms of exclusion and

segregation are needed. The concepts of exclusion and segregation are still relevant and important.

> There are different forms of silencing and exclusion - some are a process of active repression or strong social disapproval and others are a product of an organisational process: for in our society we see less of the rough stuff and more of a steady institutional process, equally effective and much less visible in its exclusionary force. (Smith 1987 p.70)

These processes of resistance by men need to be revealed. Walby has analysed patriarchal exclusion and segregation strategies with regard to trade unions (Walby 1986) and she argues that where an initial attempt at exclusion fails, segregation strategies will be pursued. The gender segregation of women in the industries studied is seen by Walby as the outcome of the articulation of patriarchal and capitalist interests.

Social Closure

Witz (1992) applies the concept of patriarchal exclusion strategies to the professions using the Weberian concept of social closure. Crompton (1987) has also argued that, when looking at professional and managerial women in the labour market it may be more fruitful to develop neo-Weberian theory than a Marxist one.

Weber used the term 'closure' to refer to the process of subordination whereby one group monopolises advantages by closing off opportunities to another group of outsiders beneath it which it defines as inferior and ineligible (Murphy 1988).

Groups differentiated themselves from others on the basis of some attribute or other which they possessed whether nationality, wealth, social class, status, skin colour, gender or more recently, educational or professional qualifications (Weber 1978 pp.999-1000). What is important is that the attribute which distinguishes those with the group from those without is essentially contingent - it is chosen to ensure the maintenance of a boundary, it is not there because it is a real boundary, it is the constructed boundary that operates to distinguish (Grint 1995).

Frank Parkin, one of the major protagonists of neo-Weberian closure theory, offers a baseline definition of modes of closure as different means of mobilising power in order to stake claims to resources and opportunities (Witz 1992). He also defines exclusionary strategies of closure as involving the downwards exercise of power in a process of subordination as a social group seeks to secure, maintain or enhance privileged access to rewards and opportunities (Parkin 1975). Gendered forms of exclusionary strategies have been used to secure for men privileged access to rewards and opportunities in the occupational labour market (Witz 1992 p.46). These strategies serve to create women as a class of ineligibles through excluding them from routes of access to resources such as skills, knowledge, entry credentials or technical competence thus precluding women from entering and practising within an occupation.

Witz rightly warns that closure strategies may rely too heavily on process with the danger that structures disappear altogether and argues that it is necessary to keep in view the interplay between strategy and structure, between actions and resources for action (Witz 1992 p.51). To use this Weberian concept is not to conclude that closure provides an exhaustive explanation on the position of women in organisations. Crompton (1987) points out that one does not have to argue that the

positional structure is wholly determined by closure in order to acknowledge that closure strategies have a significant impact.

Witz develops Hartmann's and Walby's theory of occupational segregation (1992) using the concept of closure. She differentiates between processes and outcomes and argues that job segregation by sex is the outcome of ongoing processes of gendered occupational closure in the labour market. She applies the concept of patriarchal modes of occupational closure when male power is used to sustain gender specific forms of closure. She takes Weberian closure theory - strategies of exclusion (Parkin 1974) and demarcation (Kreckel 1980) and adds the gender dimension to show how unequal gender relations are created and sustained within an occupational hierarchy in the labour market. Witz develops the distinctions Parkin makes for ungendered forms of occupational closure. In particular she distinguishes between exclusionary closure in which men control their own occupation, and demarcationary closure in which there is an attempt to control the boundary with adjacent occupations (e.g. doctors and radiographers).

> I shall use the term demarcation to refer to strategies engaged in by dominant social or occupational groups who have greater power resources than those groups hit by demarcation strategies. They turn not upon the exclusion, but upon the encirclement of women within a related but distinct sphere of competence in an occupational division of labour, and in addition, their possible (indeed probable) subordination to male dominated occupations. (Witz 1992 p. 47)

Witz uses the term demarcation in preference to segregation which she prefers to reserve to describe the structured outcome of closure processes i.e. job segregation by sex. This differentiation between exclusion and demarcation may be useful in examining areas of professional work which have been 'feminised' and can, as a

result, be characterised as part of Bagguley's functional segregation (Bagguley 1991). Witz found historical evidence to conclude that the development of professional power within medicine was informed by patriarchal strategies of closure and demarcation which effectively excluded women from participating, except marginally, in medical practice.

Culture as Closure

I think it is possible to take Weber's idea of social closure and include more subtle, informal kinds of exclusionary practices. The construction of a boundary may include a cultural boundary and indeed Geertz (1973) took this idea of construction to be the most valuable approach to culture. I aim to show how organisational culture acts as a means of social closure in this way, how cultural boundaries exclude women from certain areas of work, or include them and marginalise them. I discussed in the theory section how organisational culture is exclusionary as well as inclusionary. Culture as a means of social closure has been identified before. Collins' work (1979) on education and closure specifically focused on cultural markets and cultural production. Crompton has referred to the importance of organisational culture in her discussion on credentialism and women and the professions, quoting Collins

> Although there is good reason to believe that credentials are becoming more important in the processes surrounding the allocation of individuals to positions of organisational power, nevertheless access to 'property in positions' is still, to a considerable extent, determined by indigenous organisational culture - 'minimal exchange upon practical matters ..or .. talk containing larger proportions of discussion, ideological debate, entertainment, gossip, or personal topics' (Crompton 1987 p.421)

Crompton goes on to say that in organisations, memberships of associational groups in whose culture they can participate comfortably, can be highly significant in determining life chances for the individual in the organisation and thus, ultimately, location in the occupational structure. Crompton acknowledges Kanter's assertions that male culture tends to dominate in organisations and says that

> the processes of gender exclusion, via indigenous culture production within organisations, are extremely difficult to research and quantify. They must however, be recognised as a crucial element to organisational power and in the allocation of organisational positions. Research difficulties cannot be used as an excuse for ignoring these important social phenomena.(Crompton 1987 p.423)

It may be argued that as members of a status group share a common culture and a sense of identity based on status equality, they feel it to be normatively legitimate to exclude from their own status groups those who are different. I argue that as men and women find themselves in more formally equal situations in work, culture becomes an important differentiating feature through which men, by dominating the work culture, can exclude and marginalise women.

Bagguley has also discussed the possibility of culture being used as a means of social closure (Bagguley 1991). He pointed out that Walby's and Witz's work on exclusionary strategies concentrates on organised male exclusion, in Walby's case, trade unions and in Witz's case, the professions. He asks what happens when there are no formal organisations? Bagguley shies away from using culture as a means of social closure.

> Culture can be an effective part of an explanation of the reproduction of gender segregation since it often consists of post-hoc rationalisation by agents of prevailing circumstances. However it is relatively weak as an explanation of change. (Bagguley 1991 p.611)

Instead Bagguley draws on trade union studies to describe two types of action, 'monological' which refers to official centralised action and 'dialogical' which refers to power through members' own actions. He argues that where formal commitment to sexual equality exists patriarchs cannot draw on monological resources, so they have to draw on dialogical resources. He says that we are currently witnessing a move from monological to dialogical forms of patriarchal mobilisation, which are far harder for women to challenge

> the immediate workplace or employer is the principal sphere of focus of action. Strategies of exclusion and segregation may be as 'informal' as sexual harassment in the workplace. (Bagguley 1991 p.613)

Dialogical control includes informal collusion, conscious or unconscious, between men and the beliefs that they transmit to each other and act upon. Bagguley differentiates dialogical processes from culture saying they are neither cultural nor material processes but I think that an adequate conceptualisation of organisational culture should be as theoretically sound as the concept of dialogical processes. There are other aspects of organisational culture which could not readily be conceptualised as dialogical control which may have an influence on women in organisations. The concept of social closure is, I think, appropriate in analysing the ways in which managerial and professional women are either excluded or marginalised in organisations.

CHAPTER TWO

METHODS

INTRODUCTION

This chapter discusses some of the debates on research into organisational culture, and on feminist research. I specify my research question and show how I went about answering it. My research hypothesis is that organisational culture acts as a means of patriarchal closure to exclude or to marginalise women in management. My study was to investigate this hypothesis and find out in what ways different cultures acted as means of closure. In this respect I had to operationalise culture i.e. break it down into the different constituents which I think have a gendered impact in organisations, and try to obtain enough data to investigate any closure effects these various constituents of culture may have on women managers. To do this I needed access to at least two large organisations which employed women managers.

I have written this chapter in the order in which I did my research i.e. literature reviews on organisational culture methods and feminist methods, pilot work, operationalisation and choice of methods, and the development of the questionnaire. I then give some detail as to how I gained access to my two case studies followed by an introduction to them before discussing my sampling pools. I describe the research process including a discussion on some ethical issues. A short description of the research methods used for the particular consituent of culture is included in each chapter.

RESEARCHING ORGANISATIONAL CULTURE

The research of organisational culture has broadly been undertaken by two groups of people, consultants who do it on a commercial basis and academics who do it to advance organisational theory. Management consultants and writers have favoured the questionnaire, which examines the values and beliefs of employees. These kind of surveys are quick and provide an insight without too much intrusion to the company but their drawback is their lack of reliability and the superficiality of the data. Most of these surveys are done for the purpose of ascertaining whether particular managerial goals are being met and, hence, may be charged with managerial bias. It is also questionable if a culture can be captured by an outsider using only a questionnaire. The second approach is to do an ethnographic study which involves spending a long period of time in the organisation and can provide much richer material and a better insight into the culture, and would be favoured by most sociologists (myself included). Time, cost and the difficulty of gaining access to organisations over a long period of time, particularly at management level, are the main barriers to this type of approach.

> The combined use of sophisticated questionnaire surveys, detailed interviews and observation may give great insight into an organisation's culture but it is also extremely time-consuming and labour intensive. Unsurprisingly they are also quite rarely conducted.(Brown 1995 p.61)

My feeling at the beginning of this research was to do both a questionnaire and interviews and, where possible, observation to get the greatest overall impression of the culture with the resources I had available. Spending time in an organisation, knowing its organisational layout (whether it is open - planned or not etc.), its eating facilities, its art, artefacts, seemed to me an important aspect of culture missed by a

questionnaire (Gagliardi 1990). My reading of the literature enabled me to breakdown a definition of culture which I would be able to operationalise. I now move on to some of the 'bigger' questions concerning methods and methodology.

I discuss some of the issues that are relevant to feminist research and locate my position within the current debates. I also touch on some of the postmodern approaches which are currently popular in organisational theory, particularly in the study of organisational culture (see Cooper and Burrell 1988; Linstead and Grafton-Small 1992). I would argue that feminist interests led me to the choose this research topic and explain the purpose of the research but had no direct influence on my choice of methods. I argue with Harding that it is the methodology and epistemology behind the methods which determines the feminist angle not the methods themselves (Harding 1987).

Feminist methods

Ann Oakley was one of the first sociologists to articulate the needs of women within the research process (1981) and argued that the interview techniques as taught to sociologists were useless when applied to the experiences of women. The whole notion of objective researcher and distant subject to be researched, prevented, she argued, any real communication and thus any real information flowing between the interviewer and interviewee. She outlined her own methods of interviewing and denounced the traditional techniques, like the formal survey-type interview, as wholly unsuitable to the production of good sociology. She found herself involved in a personal way with her interviewees in her study of maternity and declared that if she had remained objective and refused to answer personal questions, she would never have obtained the detailed information she actually ended up with (Oakley

1981). Like Oakley, Janet Finch, in her study of clergy wives (1983), was astonished by the readiness with which women talked to her. She said that they wanted to 'place' her as a woman and when they found that she herself was a clergy wife, all inhibitions disappeared. I experienced something of this myself as my own background and work experience was very similar to many of the women I was interviewing and I often told them about myself so that they would be able to identify with me. However, this was not so much the case with the men, whose life experience I did not share and who were not so ready to divulge much in the way of personal life. Would this make that part of the research non-feminist? Clara Greed said of her research on women surveyors

> The research process is very much a two way exchange of ideas and feelings; and I have learned so much from other women that the traditional research model of subject and object is totally inappropriate.(Greed 1991 p.76)

I disagree. Of course you learn from the interview experience but that is why you are doing it and, in the end, it is you who want information from them, however much you wrap it up as a mutual experience.

These early feminist studies have influenced the way sociological research is conducted, and highlighted the necessity of reflexivity and the ways in which the researcher need not be removed from the study. Orthodox sociology has often failed to recognise the fact that a white middle class male view of the world is only a partial view. Postmodernism also emphasises the lack of objectivity of social researchers, yet, in my view, paradoxically commits the same error by trying to remove the knower completely with the result that we have no tie between the researcher and the researched subject (Foucault 1991). However, feminist and postmodernist

criticism of Western science, including social science has resulted in a much more careful examination of the role of the researcher in the research process.

> sociologists ..... should continually reflect upon the ways in which their own social identity and values affect the data they are gathering and the picture of social reality they are producing. (O'Connell Davidson and Layder 1994 p.52)

The emphasis on the research relationship in the debate on feminist methods led to some polarisation of empirical research, which was denounced as masculine and partial, and the new feminist qualitative research, which was considered by some as the only way feminists should do research (Mies 1983). Mies (1983) has argued that feminists cannot use old positivist and quantitative methods in their research - 'new wine should not be poured into old bottles'.

Despite being criticised as being part of the classical, objective tradition, statistics and empirical work are still highly favoured by some feminist researchers. In her book on methods, Joyce Nielson (1990) defends her choice of empirically based research studies. She argues that feminists need empiricism for the same reason as it was initially developed - to back up argument, and guard against bias and superstition. More practically she argues that the world is still grounded in empiricist science and facts and figures do still have power. Ann Pugh argues for the self conscious and reflexive use of statistics (1984) and Toby Epstein Jayaratne (1983) argues for a combination of both qualitative and quantitative methods. She notes that one important part of quantitative research is generalising

> Generalised statements are important both for advising policy makers of public opinion and deciding strategies for bringing about change in public opinion itself.... and argues for....our methods to be as objective as possible.(Jayaratne 1983 p.121)

Jayaratne says there is no difficulty with having strong opinions and doing objective research as long as the researcher makes their commitment clear. I agree that the use of both quantitative and qualitative methods may be helpful - the subject matter and resources available should determine the methods. The use of figures and statistics can be very helpful and certainly, in my work, the organisations involved expected some figures in the reports I did for them. My limited time and resources meant that I had to make best use of different methods. Two hundred in depth interviews may have given me the same data but would have been impossible to do alone. Although my survey samples were small, I have no reason to think that I could not generalise from them to the rest of the organisation, particularly backed up by the qualitative data, and this was important for both my own interest and the organisations which I studied. My own research involved interviews with both men and women, a survey and some participant observation.

I agree, then, with Harding (1987) that it is the methodology and epistemology behind the use of research methods which determines them as feminist or not. What seems to identify feminist research is its commitment to the political cause of ending discrimination and oppression of women.

> The overt ideological goal ....to correct both the invisibility and the distortion of female experience in ways relevant to ending women's unequal social position. (Lather 1991 p.57)

Postmodernism and Methods

Like feminism, postmodernism has been concerned with the deconstruction of truth and knowledge. It shares feminism's concern over authorship and subjectivity but

its tendency to deconstruct all in its sight and its rejection of any meta-theory gives feminism problems.

Postmodernism rejects the possibility of a once and for all truth and points to the connections between powerful interest groups and competing discourses to explain the claim to truth. All knowledge is then self-referential, coherent only in terms of its own discourse, since there exist no meta-justifications, no higher external authority, by reference to which claims to knowledge may be judged.

The concerns for women are twofold, firstly, that what they have to say is of no more importance than what anybody else has to say. Either one must adopt the perspective of the transcendental and disembodied voice of 'reason' or one must abandon the goal of accurate and systematic knowledge of the world. As Hartsock (1989) says, to be faced with this stark choice is to be imprisoned by the alternatives imposed by Enlightenment thought and postmodernism. She argues for marginalised voices - and says, quite rightly, that they of all people are unlikely to mistake themselves for the universal man. Feminism has always subscribed to a truth, that over the ages men as a group have persistently oppressed women as a group, and to give this up as one truth among many invalidates feminist goals.

Gillian Coleman as a postmodernist feminist researcher of organisations asks - "If all accounts of our realities are partial is the outcome despair?" and answers

> My feeling is not. I believe I can both accept the partiality of my world view and move within it. (Coleman 1991 p.27)

She accepts that her truth is not 'the truth' and not a meta-discourse, but says "my discourse is as valid as any other." As valid as another calling her research 'left loony nonsense' perhaps. This does not seem quite good enough.

The second concern for women is that it is impossible to speak on behalf of others. The deconstruction of 'women' is having profoundly destabilising effects upon feminist theorising and research (Butler 1990; Barrett 1991). Assumptions that women share any common ground at all have been challenged. Oakley and Mitchell's (1997) use of the phrase 'natural body' in their discussion of gender would be contested by some postmodernist writers (Riley1988; Wittig 1981; Butler 1990).

Without unity of women's identity, many critics see postmodern feminism as opening the doors to fragmentation, factionalism and political disempowerment (Hartsock 1989; di Stefano 1989). Following Assiter (1996), I argue for the continuing use of the concept of woman as an identity, based on a set of minimally necessary biological factors. This has been called strategic essentialism (Bordo 1990), which I think is a helpful phrase. Even Judith Butler (1990, 1994), who has perhaps done more than any other theorist to deconstruct the concept of woman, insists we do need the concept of women for feminism.

> Within feminism, it seems as if there is some political necessity to speak as and for women and I would not contest that necessity. (Butler 1994 p.15)

Other feminists assert the similar need to acknowledge women as a group.

> If those who call themselves feminists cannot even decide upon who women are, how can political demands be enacted in the name of women? (Nicholson 1994 p.102)

And again, in everyday life, women do often group together and identify with one another. Baden and Goetz themselves noted that in the Beijing conference in 1995

> It is hard to find a space in contemporary feminist theory for the genuine sense of connection as women of which so many women spoke in Huairou and Beijing, yet it seems dishonest not to bear testimony to the palpable sense of commonality in spite of great differences. (Baden and Goetz.1997 p.20)

The methodological practice favoured by a postmodernist epistemology is deconstruction and discourse analysis. In deconstruction the search is for differences, gaps and instabilities in time space and text (Cooper 1989). This method has been found useful by some feminists in organisational theory (Martin 1990).

> Most organizations are controlled by men and by assumptions for example about the legitimacy of authority, which in effect favour men. Women's interests therefore often appear as contradictions, disjunctions, disruptions and silences - signs of suppressed conflict. (Martin 1990 p.341)

Martin's illustrating deconstruction of a speech about the immanent Caesarean birth of a senior executive's baby dismantles the public/private dichotomy, which holds working women in this double bind. She shows how this is a false distinction, an ideological assumption not a social fact. She is challenging the prevailing discourse of organisations, disrupting it with an alternative one. But Martin is continually going beyond the text to explain what the issues at stake really are, drawing on feminist theory. She is acknowledging that the context of the speech is important - strictly textual criticism would stand alone - and more than that she acknowledges the unequal power relations between the speaker and the subject. The goal is not to reveal the truth but to illuminate how a certain 'reading' has come about. But I

believe that any deconstruction involves a political stance as it replaces one way of seeing a text with another, revealing different interests.

Analysis at the level of discourse aims to expose the context in which meanings are conveyed. Some discourses become so powerful that they appear as common sense, and these may be described as hegemonic discourses. The analyst attempts to denaturalize the text, asking why this particular construction has appeared in this context and what ends it achieves (Marshall and Wetherell 1989). Fraser has suggested that

> a theory of discourse can illuminate how the cultural hegemony of dominant groups in society is secured and contested (Fraser 1992 p52).

Following Wetherell, Stiven and Potter (1987), an analysis at the level of discourse enables us to investigate shared beliefs and values and explain how people are only able to articulate thoughts through discourses to which they have access. This was a useful approach for analysis of the data on gender and equal opportunities.

My theoretical stance on methods

This is a piece of empirical research conducted from a feminist perspective. It engages with theory and I use it to develop theory as well as to reveal some of the taken for granted assumptions about gender buried in organisational cultures. I have gathered data in as objective and rational a manner as possible, whilst acknowledging the postmodern criticism of my own impartiality and heeding the need to be as reflexive as possible. I use the concept of discourse to illustrate the anomalies and ambiguities of what people did and didn't say, alongside the traditional methods of

questionnaire survey, interviews and participant observation. The research however is grounded in meta-theory, feminism, which distances it somewhat from postmodernism (Hassard 1993). Hartsock (1990) has suggested that post-structuralist thought may be better understood as offering interpretative tools and historical critique rather than theoretical frameworks for wholesale adoption. The research is grounded in the belief that there is a connection between what is researched and reality, that there has been some historical progress in the liberation of Western women and that there is a connection/link between the multiple oppressions, both historical and present of women the world over. However partial a discovery it makes, its aim is to reveal the reality of the ways in which organisational cultures inhibit or marginalise women in organisational life.

THE RESEARCH

Pilot work

I did some preliminary work talking to women in business organisations, and to HR personnel responsible for equal opportunities and some consultants, all who gave very freely of their time. This was in order to develop an idea of what I was going to research and how I would approach it. What aspects of culture did it seem were a problem for women and could I conceptualise culture in a broad enough way to integrate some of the barriers women were reporting? Literature from women in management literature, feminist sociology of employment and the more managerial organisational culture literature gave me huge amounts of information, and many different definitions of organisational culture from which to draw my own constituents of culture (Blomberg 1987; Bate 1992; McLean and Marshall 1983; Brown 1995; Handy 1985; Schein 1991). I described this in the theory section.

Operationalisation

Culture audits are now used by management to guage their organisational culture. The Industrial Society and many management consultants use them and I obtained a couple of them to see the ways they asked employees about culture. I, however, did not intend to capture the entire organisational culture of either organisation but, rather, I wanted to analyse parts of it which I felt to have an impact on gender. Drawing then from a literature review of the women in management material and from the literature on corporate culture and looking at many definitions, I broke down organisational culture into a number of different constituents and asked what gendered impact they may have. My 'definition' for the purposes of this research is not meant to be exhaustive, but it is much wider than most managerialist and sociological definitions. It is certainly the first 'definition' in the organisational culture literature to specifically incorporate gender, sexuality and work ideologies. The breakdown of culture in this way was done to facilitate research and to be clear about the areas I wanted to capture although in reality they often overlap.

Cultural Constituents to be Researched

1. Gender Awareness
2. Management Style
3. Time Management
4 Public/Private Divide
5. Informal Socialising
6. Sexuality

Obviously the background to the organisation - industry, size, geography and ownership history is important in guaging the culture and I also noted physical aspects of the organisations - architecture, office layout, visual imagery, cultural artefacts.

I took each constituent and listed questions that I would need to ask to give me answers as to whether or not the constituent was gendered, and in what ways.

Triangulation

The next step was to determine which method was best for each question. Some, like women's feelings around maternity and childcare, were best answered through interviews; others, like how meetings were conducted and how the offices looked, were best answered by participant observation; others, like incidents of sexual harassment, by questionnaire. Documentary research gave me information about gender composition and the organisations' history. I noted the particular method most suitable for each question to be answered and then went on to develop an interview schedule and a questionnaire, based on this list.

Documentary research involved using the business library and reading through company reports, newspaper clippings and stockbrokers' research material, which I obtained through contacts.

Observation - I intended to do some shadowing, which turned out to be feasible in one case study but not in the other. All interviews took place in the work setting so, over the months, I was able to gain an impression of the surroundings.

Questionnaires - I wanted some statistical information and so did the organisations in the reports I wrote for them. The questionnaires were sent to a systematic, stratified sample of male and female managers.

Interviews - I conducted taped, semi structured interviews of one to two hours with male and female managers, again from a systematic, stratified sample of managers. The interviewees were not the same as the questionnaire respondents. I decided against asking questionnaire participants whether they would be interested in being interviewed because I think it results in too much self-selection .

I had considered focus groups but, in the event, decided against it. I think in a smaller, more co-operative environment, focus groups may have yielded some interesting discussions but the structure of the first study, the airline, did not lend itself to doing this and also I felt that it required more co-operation from the company than I was willing to ask for. The size and layout of the second study, the bank, did lend itself to focus groups, but the reluctance on the part of the organisation to address the issue of gender, combined with the fear of a backlash I came across from the women, ruled the idea out immediately.

Triangulation may be used not just to corroborate findings but also to provide the optimum method for a particular type of information. Sometimes two or three of the methods are appropriate. In the case of sexual harassment, the questionnaire gave me an indication of how widespread the problem was, which would have been impossible from interviews whereas some of the more frank interviews informed me of the types of behaviour which had occurred. Figures, even from a small sample like mine may yield some interesting trends and organisations like to have quantified analyses in their reports.

> The more sources and types of data we can gather and compare, the surer we can be of the validity of our overall findings and interpretations.(O'Connell Davidson and Layder 1994 p.53)

Once I had developed my methods and knew roughly how I was going to approach the topic I set out to find my case studies, knowing that circumstances may dictate some alterations to my methods plan.

ACCESS AND BACKGROUND TO CASE STUDIES

My objective, then, was to enter at least two organisations and attempt to observe the different cultures within them to see whether they had differing impacts on women managers. Both corporate culture and organisational theory literature often fail to give adequate attention to the different cultures which exist within one organisation and I felt that this was an important area in perhaps determining why some areas of organisations remained hard for women to break into. I needed to study organisations which were big enough to have a number of separate divisions. I chose the private sector because it is less researched than the public sector, and was anxious to get in at the highest level possible.

> Often as not elites and powerful people and institutions are frequently able to deny access because they do not wish themselves or their decision - making processes to be studied, it is inconvenient, they are busy and wish to assert their rights to privacy and so on. (Hornsby-Smith 1993 p.55)

It is worth putting this quote at the beginning of this section as it was relevant throughout my research. I was never the 'powerful' researcher studying the underprivileged and powerless. To some extent I was and could have been a

subversive presence in conservative organisations because I was, for my research purposes, questioning the status quo. I had to both fit in and question and this split in my interests was always something I had to negotiate carefully. My access to both organisations was entirely due to two people and I had to both to provide reports for them and obtain the data for my own research.

My original intention was to choose three companies from different industries but, as I progressed, time and resources dictated that I left it to the two.

Access to first case study, Airco

Companies are inundated with proposals by PhD students wanting case studies and so I planned my approach quite carefully. I wrote originally to several of the companies which had representatives on the Steering Group (now called the Target Group) of Opportunity 2000, the government-backed equality campaign. Although there were around three hundred companies who were members of Opportunity 2000, I felt that actually being part of the Steering Group showed that the organisation was particularly committed to equality issues. Several companies replied, declining, and more failed to respond at all. But one, an airline, Airco replied immediately and was interested. I had written to the Chief Executive, who was the person on the Steering Group, and he had passed it on to a senior woman director, Cath, from Human Resources, who invited me in for a meeting. We were the same age and hit it off immediately, even finding that we had a friend in common. She was overtly feminist in her approach, without using the word, and had experienced first hand some of the obstacles that I was to research and she was keen that I came in to do the study.

My first meeting with Cath was to discuss the research bargain - I knew that I was going to have to offer something back in return for access and the more I offered the better the access I would have. We agreed that I should write a report on my findings for the airline, which would include several areas that they were specifically interested in, and that her department would have its stamp on the report. There were discussions on confidentiality and I had a letter drawn up which, in the event, she never asked for. Also security was a problem. The public is barred from entering any part of the airline and I had to be issued with a pass. At first Cath issued me with a pass for a specific place on a specific day but as time passed and, I think, she trusted me more she gave me one for a couple of months. This pass still did not give me access to all the buildings - I had to be passed through each time I went to some of them and it had to be organised in advance. Sitting in the 'welcome' building - wrong name - trying to find out why a pass hadn't been issued became an irritatingly frequent part of the research experience. I experienced only a few teething problems in gaining access apart from the nuisance of passing through security. My early anxiety was around my total dependence on my contact. She wanted to select the interview candidates herself, finding suitable people, but I managed to persuade her otherwise, although I compromised in allowing her to see the sampling frame. She vetoed one name and I later found out that this woman had some mental health problems which Cath thought would make her unsuitable to interview. There was an element of tugging at the start of the research as to how much of it was mine and how much was hers. I felt a lot happier when I had my sample pool printed out in front of me and I took it home.

Cath made suggestions, choosing divisions which she thought would make good comparisons as well as ones where she had excellent contacts - this was to become vital. The Human Resources divisions gave me printed out sheets of the names of all

the managers of these divisions, broken down by sex. Managers at Airco are divided into two groups - Management Group (MG) and above that Senior Managers (SM). I use the initials MG and SM throughout the research .

Big changes were afoot in the company at this time, as a new Chief Executive had just taken over and was planning a restructuring. Cath got on well with this new chief and, over the next couple of months, her interest in the research study waned as she planned her next career move. Another more junior manager had been given responsibility for EO under Cath and, towards the end, it was she who I liaised with, when Cath gained a promotion and moved jobs. This woman was much more cautious than Cath and had no feminist insights at all. It was she who read the report and distributed it. My timing was fortuitous - if I had been handed straight over to the more junior woman at the start I would never have got access to the senior people that my contact with Cath gave me. The managing director of Cargo and the number two in Cabin Services were great friends of hers and this familiarity and her endorsement of me meant that I was treated with great respect and helped tremendously during my time there. They were doing her a favour by seeing me and letting me spend time in their divisions. This enabled my observation through shadowing which I found invaluable as the airline is a complex business, and I gained a huge amount of my insights by joining them at lunch and sitting in meetings. I spent a day in each division, shadowing a senior manager.

Background to Airco

The airline was situated on one site which made the research physically easy. A former state industry, it had been privatised in the eighties under the Conservative government. The transformation of an ailing state owned airline, with its accompanying mix of civil service and military culture into a profitable global

business during the 1980's has been well documented and is still recent enough to remain in the minds of most of the workforce.

Financially the airline had to be resurrected from the dead and transformed into a company ready for privatisation. Airco had been highly segmented between functions and characterised by low personal feedback, neglect of subordinates, depersonalisation and hierarchy. Drastic change was required both structurally and culturally. The workforce was nearly halved over four years to 35,000 through voluntary redundancies and early retirement and the business emphasis was placed firmly on service to the customer. An internal campaign called Putting People First ran from 1983 -1987 which communicated and put into practice results of market research which had showed that service to the customer was paramount to success. Every employee who came into contact with the public went on a training course. Middle and senior management attended a five day residential course to equip them to manage people in a more open and honest way. The campaign was people orientated and followed the logic that, in order to care for the customer, the carers had to be cared for too by management. The old rigid RAF structure was abolished and efforts made to reduce the hierarchies, and titles were replaced by names. This culture change has been remarkably successful but continual training and reinforcement is still required. Change, both structural and cultural is still ongoing. The organisation is very reflective and self-aware which, for my purposes, made discussions of concepts like culture and gender easy.

I arrived for my field research in the middle of a new campaign which aimed to make managers more responsible and accountable for their decisions. This new culture change accompanied some restructuring of the organisation. Support Services were being brought in from the line and centralised, resulting in redundancies in middle

management. A role review had changed the structure of Human Resources six months before I arrived and Finance was in the middle of a similar role review. 'Breakthrough', a campaign specific to Cabin Services, was into its second year and I was present during a special Breakthrough week.

Despite the glamour of the global airline business the workplace setting for most employees was decidely gloomy. The presence of barbed wire ringed fences and buildings with no identifiable front doors, let alone receptions, which doubled up as car parks and engineering works, did not add up to a very glamorous work environment. Technical Block C sounded (and looked) more like a prison building than home to Human Resources. The old Speedbird House carried remnants of RAF days with long dreary corridors and offices behind numbered closed doors. Finding a car park space was hard. Leaving late and walking out to one of outdoor giant car parks or finding your car in the multi- story car park could not be a very pleasant experience for women on a dark wintry night. But, standing out like a jewel on a rubbish dump was the Compass Centre, location of the Cabin Services division on the northern perimeter. This, I was told, was the blueprint building for the future.

<u>Divisions</u>

The divisional differences of an organisation was always going to be a big part of my research and one reason why I chose a large company. Some of these divisions were almost like separate companies. I wanted a mix - a division with few women managers, a division with a lot of women managers and a division with equal numbers, if possible. This was the advantage of such a big organisation, there were plenty of women managers to give the statistical side of the research some meaning. I had decided that five was as many as I could manage and, guided by Cath, I chose Cargo, Human Resources, Marketing, Cabin Services and Finance.

Cargo

Cargo is an autonomous business unit, with its own profit and loss account, its own HR division and finance divisions and this has meant that it has been less pervious to the changes in airline culture and practice. It is situated in a few buildings in the cargo area of the airport site, with other cargo companies. In some ways the employees of Cargo have more affinity and sense of belonging to the cargo industry than to the airline. Whilst the division has been very successful in the past and it was more or less left to its own devices, in recent years margins have been eroded and a new management team has come in to bring it into the 1990's and more in line with the airline. A new building was being constructed, which was going to be the most expensive cargo building in Europe and this had become a symbol of the future of the division - modern, streamlined and state of the art.

The Cargo division was in the process of undergoing a change in culture and structure as a whole. In the past it has been characterised by lifelong employment, relaxed working conditions, high rates of pay, particularly on the shop floor, and heavily protected by a strong union. Working practices have been restrictive and family connections strong. Cargo has been a traditionally male environment with the shopfloor/hangar operations involving heavy handling work. Its image of tough, men's work pervades even the top management although they are more likely to have reached their position with an MBA than through experience on the shopfloor. Women have only just started to come into management positions here and there was only one senior woman manager.

Cabin Services

This division is made up of ten thousand cabin crew members and their management.

I thought Cabin Services would be interesting because of the glamourous image of

cabin staff, and also about one third of senior managers were women. The whole division is housed in the Compass Centre along with Flight Operations (pilots). The Compass Centre is the flagship building of the airline. It looks like an updated version of the Pompidou Centre in Paris with bright blue steel tubular designs and lots of blue glass. You walk into a huge hall with an atrium, a ultra sleek modern cafe sits opposite the reception area and you feel you are entering a smart hotel, particularly with the continual flow of cabin crew wheeling their luggage in and out. Inside the facilities are excellent, with computer terminals dotted around so that cabin crew and pilots can check their flight schedules.

Cabin Services was also going through a process of change, trying to move in line with customer needs. Market research had showed that the airline wasn 't delivering as good a service as it might. Increased competition has allowed air passengers of the nineties to be fickle and the service element of air travel has never been so important, particularly on long haul and business flights. Passengers want a more personal and flexible service from the cabin crews who had become too standardised and formal in their approach. In the previous year the Breakthrough programme was launched and every single one of the ten thousand cabin crew will pass through it. While I was there, there was a Breakthrough week which included an exhibition of the airline's service over the years. I will discuss the Breakthrough programme in the chapter on management style.

Finance

Finance represented a traditional male stronghold which the arrival of young female accountants was changing. Its status fluctuated according to the fortunes of the airline. In the eighties it wielded a lot of power as its 'banking' role drove many of the harsh changes necessary to turn the airline into a profit making organisation.

More recently there were efforts to make it more pro-active, more of a financial consultant than a banker, and this was why many new young accountants had been brought in. About twenty per cent of senior managers in Finance were women, many were the young, newly trained accountants.

Unlike Cargo and Cabin Services, Finance was spread out in different buildings with those who worked in line finance found in the relevant division's building. The treasury division was a stand-alone specialist operation run by one of the most senior women in the airline.

Human Resources

Human Resources is a traditionally popular area for women and this was reflected in the numbers. Nearly fifty per cent of senior managers were women. The high number of Airco employees (over thirty thousand) and the service element of the industry ensures that this division is highly valued. Most of the division is situated in one of the older buildings on the seventh floor providing a mix of open plan, with private offices for all senior managers. Work stations are arranged in groups of three to four with screens strategically placed to give privacy. A role review two years ago had changed the HR function. Specialists had been pulled back off the line and moved into a central role to work as consultants on different projects, and there was considerable unease about these changes.

Marketing

This division also had equal numbers of men and women managers, even at senior level, and, as a newer industry with a more feminine feel I thought it would make a good contrast to Cargo, which had only a sprinkling of women. The marketing division had grown significantly since the Chairman and former Chief Executive,

who had a strong marketing background, arrived fifteen years before. The concept of the airline having brands e.g. club class, first class, executive etc. is a fairly new one, and the division has quite a zing to it. As competition among all the world airlines increases so does the importance of satisfying different customer requirements.The division's recent growth means that it has had to spread out to different buildings around the airport site, and some of the working conditions were among the worst I came across. Crowded, hot, open plan offices with no natural light or air - one group was found in the upstairs of a hangar - a far cry from the hip advertising offices in Soho .

Access to second case study, Serco

My first choice for the second study was to go into an accountancy firm, but, as partnerships, they guard their privacy and I had no luck with access. I had spent two and a half years in the City when I graduated, and still have some good contacts there, so I felt it would be worth exploring possibilities there. The head of personnel of the bank I used to work in, steered me in the direction of Serco, which she said had more women directors than other merchant banks. I had already heard about the head of personnel at Serco through a friend who had worked there and knew she was sympathetic to equal opportunities. I wrote directly to her and she asked for a meeting. She was enthusiastic but had to 'sell' the project to other directors before I was allowed in. I was quite surprised when I heard quite quickly that I was in. The drawback of this for a comparison with the first case study was its size - only three and a half thousand employees. This, combined with the fact that still very few women work in the City, meant that my numbers at times were very small. The divisions were not as clear cut as in the airline and I chose the three larger ones;

Securities (SSEC), Investment (SIM) and Corporate Finance (ECFD), into which I included the small department of Project Finance (IPD).

A woman, Pip, who had just joined the bank in the personnel department in order to introduce management training schemes, was designated to liaise with me throughout the project. She didn't know anybody in the bank and, more importantly, no one knew her and most resented her projects. There was widespread contempt for personnel, as illustrated by a male director referring to the department as consisting of a 'posse of interfering women who didn't earn the bank any fees but irritated the staff with their endless memos and policy suggestions'. This was reflected in the way I was treated, which was with great caution by most of the people I met. My liaising contact, Pip, was very nervous and anxious not to upset people. Yet, in spite of this, issues of confidentiality were not discussed. When I sent out the questionnaires, some people rang her up and basically said, "What the bloody hell is going on?" Pip turned on me and said that I should have sent a note of explanation as to what it was all about and to introduce myself etc. etc. I felt that I had said all that was required in my paragraph on page one of the questionnaire (see appendix) which had been quite satisfactory at the airline. She said people wouldn't know what to do, whether they should or shouldn't fill it out. I told her that if they wanted to throw it in the bin they could, but she said that employees at the bank would probably want permission to do that! She insisted that I write a follow- up letter immediately, providing more detail and generally reassuring them that I was bona fide etc. My instinct was to do nothing and to keep a distance from the questionnaires if possible. I had already received a large number of replies within a couple of days and I wanted to wait to see the extent of the response before being too heavy handed about chasing them up. In the event I got an excellent response, although another furious phone call from her for disobeying. I sent the letter that she

had asked for merely to chase up some late responses but I don't think it made that much difference.However, my relationship with Pip was quite cool after that and I didn't call on her for much. I had already been given my sampling list, managers, assistant directors and directors broken down by sex and indeed grade (which was very secret information as it indicated their level of salary). Her lack of contacts and the extreme conservatism at the bank meant that I was not able to spend the same amount of time shadowing people as I had in the airline. Fortunately, I was much more familiar with the business and didn't need the nuts and bolts of it explained as I had in the airline.

Background to Bank

Serco is a merchant bank dating back to the nineteenth century. It is still part-owned and controlled by the Serco family and indeed family members can be found working there. Most of my respondents genuinely believed that recruitment was meritocratic, but the majority of graduates still come from Oxford and Cambridge and most are public school educated males. The bank remains within a firmly upper middle class British tradition, in which being pleasant, personable and having good manners counts for a lot. Background, father's job, school and university are still considered important details of a person's suitability for recruitment. There are very few black people working in the investment industry, and those who do are usually found in American banks, and there are few ethnic minorities.

Although deregulation of the Stock Exchange has opened up opportunities for women as skills become more of a deciding factor in recruitment than where your father works, the environment is in many ways harsher and more competitive. There are still very few women at senior levels in the bank and most women managers are employed in the investment division.

Traditional merchant banking provided finance for trade and eleven of them were known as Accepting Houses, including Serco, as they were licensed to accept bills of exchange from the Bank of England. Some also provided investment fund management for pension funds. Since the deregulation of the investment industry many have bought or grown stockbroking divisions, expanded all round the world as capital has become truly global. Many merchant banks, such as Morgan Grenfell, Warburg, Kleinwort Benson and Barings are now foreign-owned, but Serco has stayed independent, protected by family holdings and there is a certain amount of pride in that. Its tradition and culture has to some extent been maintained. Merchant banks now have to compete with foreign investment banks. As befits its general low key image, its buildings are not grand or ostentatious. The new head office lies in the heart of the City and is of classic architecture, with plain, marbled reception area. The meeting rooms get larger and smarter the higher up the building you go - seventh floor is corporate finance, smart mahogony table, lovely views and tea brought in in porcelain cups.

Divisions

ECFD - European Corporate Finance

This division is the most prestigious part of the bank and it is the same in all other merchant banks. ECFD works on mergers, acquisitions, takeovers and flotation of companies as well as run of the mill advice to them, and it commands very high fees. Merchant banks usually charge fees as a percentage of a transaction which, if it involves big companies, can run into hundreds of millions of pounds. Working on a big deal is what every young corporate financier aspires to and, although people work in teams, this division is hugely competitive. People here can earn very high salaries - over one million pounds in a good year which is why it is an extremely competitive environment.

SIM- Fund Management Division

This division has about fifty fund managers, who look after a variety of investment funds, either pension funds for companies and local authorities or unit trusts. Its recent performance record has enabled it to win many new clients. It is headed by a forty year old woman and employs more women than any other division.

SSEC- Securities Division

This is the merchant bank's home grown stockbroking division. It started about fifteen years ago on the Asian side and has since developed to include Europe and, at times, the UK. Attempts to build up a UK business have not been successful and the bank was renewing its efforts at the time of this research, having recently employed a high profile character who came straight in on to the main bank board. He had success in building up a stockbroking division for a retail bank and has been employed to do the same here.

Stockbrokers are either sales people i.e. they sell shares or rather broke them to their clients who are fund managers or they are research analysts who analyse companies and make recommendations which the sales team can use to pitch their sales. Before Big Bang in 1986 stockbrokers were all run as partnerships but, with deregulation and the influx of foreign firms into the City, these partnerships sold themselves to banks which had far more capital than they did so as to be able to compete with the foreigners. Few of these mergers or buyouts of brokers have been successful because of a clash in culture. The securities division has been run as poor cousin to the bank for a long while. The bank wanted a stockbroking presence in various markets but, until now, has offered little real long term commitment in terms of investment. There were few women managers, and most were on the foreign sales side.

SAMPLING

My sampling frames were relatively simple to draw up. There was a clear cut management class in both the organisations I studied. In the airline it was two tiered, MGs (Management Group) and SMs (Senior Managers) with all the As (administrative grades) underneath. The airline Human Resources division gave me a list of all managers in the five divisions I had chosen to study, divided by sex. Limited resources restricted the number I could interview but, in the end, I chose thirty names from the list, selecting every one in seven names and I chose two women for every man, spread out over the two levels of management group and senior management. Inevitably some had moved from the company, gone abroad or were on maternity leave. Of those who were available only one declined to be interviewed because, as the boss of Cabin Services, he did not have time, although he passed me on to someone else in his place. I ended up with twenty four interviews, eight men and sixteen women.

For the questionnaire I tried to fix a two to one ratio of women to men, and chose every fourth name on the list and sent out 135 questionnaires to the airline. I received back 97 - about 72% response rate with which I was pleased. Again, the sex ratio was more or less intact with 36 men and 61 women.

The management structure of the bank was three-tiered, managers, assistant directors and I stratified the population accordingly. However, such was the paucity of females in the senior ranks that at times I had to include any that I could. I sent out 80 questionnaires and received 59 back, a 72% response rate, thirty six women and twenty two men. For the interviews, letters were sent out to thirty five people and I finally interviewed twenty of them, thirteen women and seven

men. I felt it was important to interview the men and, as there were so many, I chose only senior directors because I felt their views would reflect in the organisation.

> Those who control organisational rites control a form of communication that can help to reinforce or change existing distributions of power. (Beyer and Trice 1988 p.156)

RESEARCH PROCESS

The Interviews

I made an effort to blend in to both organisations and tried to find common interests through which to bond with interviewees and those I shadowed.

> One must fit in, if that seems to be called; not fit in, if it seems appropriate. One must dress acceptably, speak acceptably .....the fieldworker ....should adopt a role or identity that meshes with the values and behaviour of the group being studied, without seriously compromising the researcher's own values and behaviour. (Cassell 1988 p.96-7)

My own business background certainly gave me some credibility and my age, education and class background were very similar to the people in both studies. I made sure I dressed smartly and hoped I looked just like another employee.

The interviews provided me with information on the kind of people who worked there and in depth feel for the organisation. The downside of interviews is the lack of reliability, as a lot depends on the researcher' s individual experience with the interviewee. But the validity is greater than that of a survey as the depth of data gathered can give a more thorough indication of a respondent's thoughts than a questionnaire.

I decided to do most of the interviews first before completing the questionnaire design. This was so that I could establish whether the organisational terminology was correct i.e. name of status and whether it made sense to talk of divisions or departments etc. It also helped in honing the questionnaire on various topics, for instance, asking about equal opportunities in an organisation which didn't have any would have been pointless.

I then wrote to each person on the interview list, saying that the interviews were part of a research study in which the airline and the bank were interested but that the interviews were entirely confidential and the material would belong to me. I also said that I would telephone them for an appointment in a few days. For each interview I then had to organise a room as many of them worked in open plan offices, although they often did that for me. The interviews all lasted between one and two hours and were tape recorded. I was continually surprised that, despite the pressure they were all under and the very long hours they worked, they found the time to talk to me. I conducted the interviews along a semi-structured form, with the list of subjects corresponding to the list in the questionnaire, but varied it according to the personality and interests of my interviewee.

Having worked for eight years as a financial journalist I was quite familiar with the interview technique. But subjects that I interviewed for newspapers tended to be high profile and adept at giving interviews and they usually had something they wanted to say. In this study I sometimes had to work quite hard to get people to talk but I wasn't averse to using journalistic techniques like trading information. My main objective was to get them to talk so if this meant discussing the accounting system for half the interview I did. However, I also intervened and changed the subject if I thought it was boring and I could get away with steering it in another

direction. Talking about personal matters quite early on usually had the effect of opening an interviewee up for the rest of the interview. Sometimes this happened quite naturally, sometimes it was done intentionally on my part.

My shared background helped in the interviews with many of the women and, by the end, we were often talking like friends and laughing a lot. To get the men to talk about anything rather than business was hard. Perhaps we just didn't have enough in common and I often wondered whether a male researcher would have been more successful in drawing out the more personal aspects of work life (Roper 1994). Probably, like other women in business, I was conscious at all times to appear professional and business like, and I might have got more information by letting down my guard more. In some ways I also adapted to the prevailing culture and knew that to talk business would gain me greater credibility than to talk about family life.

My experience was very similar to that of Halford, Savage and Witz who found in their recent research (1997) that the men were far less inclined to talk about their home life or personal difficulties they may have at work, than were the women. A few of the younger men in the airline were much more relaxed though and I had some fascinating conversations with them and gained a lot of information which the women may not have been able/willing to tell me.

No one objected to the tape recorder but very often the best snippets came out after I had turned it off and we were finishing the interview. I took brief notes during the interview and wrote my thoughts and reactions to each interview in my field journal. This contained records of my phone calls, letters, worries and concerns as well as ideas.

The Questionnaire

The design of this took a long time and I was assisted in its development by a statistician which saved me putting in many unproductive questions. I followed some of the basic dos and don'ts spelled out by academics (Oppenheim 1992; Babbie 1973). My interviews enabled me to make some small changes to the questionnaire. The realisation that there was a large homosexual element in the airline made it imperative that I separated out sexuality from gender in some of my questions and I think that this has implications for the tendency in some organisational writing to collapse the two. I retained this format for the second case study, Serco. The questionnaire contained 117 questions over 23 pages which seemed very long but on a test run on friends of friends I knew it was manageable to complete in less than ten minutes. The first part of the questionnaire contained the more 'business' and factual questions like career questions, age, sex etc. and I put the more controversial questions on sexuality and gender at the back, which wouldn't seem so strange coming after lots of other questions but might have put people off if they had come at the beginning. I had to decide whether to take out some of these latter questions for the men but it would have been too complicated and I did want the women to have the chance to answer them so I left them in. Each section of the questionnaire was designed around the constituents of culture as shown in the typology and, indeed, in the interview plan. I tried to ask about facts rather than attitudes although a few attitude questions were in there. Two of the questions were open ended, the first one on gender differences in management style and the second on whether the culture of the organisation was perceived as women friendly. The responses to these were good and gave me a lot of data to add to my qualitative material. The questionnaires were coded and the data put on to a SPSS programme for analysis.

Although the pool was too small in some areas to yield sensible comparative tests, this was possible for some of the statistics.

I had decided not to distribute the questionnaire through the organisations' internal mail systems as I wanted to emphasise the anonymity of the survey and my distance from the company. I posted them from London and the front page of the questionnaire contained a short paragraph explaining the study (see appendix). In the envelope was a stamped addressed envelope (to my house). Of course, they could see that there were codes at the top of the page and some people circled this. I could identify exactly who they were and where they worked. I also put in a compliments slip with my name, address and phone number on it, in case there were questions that the respondents may wish to put to me. Early on I received two telephone calls from women at the bank who said they were interested in my questionnaire but were frightened to reply because they were easily identifiable, and they feared repercussions. We had quite a long chat on the telephone. Another four were returned to me together with a note saying 'sorry we cannot fill these out'. The sheer lack of numbers of women in the bank did make they very easy to identify and I had to bear this in mind whilst analysing the data, and particularly when writing up the report.

Participant Observation

My airline contact arranged for me to shadow certain key people in all the divisions. She asked them personally and then I made the arrangements - usually with the secretary. I spent a day with each one and found it fascinating. I sat in on many meetings, had lunch with them and generally learned a lot about the business and the way it was run. Each was very senior in the airline, in one case, the head of Cargo

and it made me reflect on the importance of leadership in establishing a culture (Schein 1983). I took notes throughout the day which I wrote up afterwards. I got to know the secretaries of the people I shadowed quite well and this gave me quite an insight into the running of the division. Sometimes, in meetings, I think people forgot I was there, other times my opinion was asked for as though I was an outside consultant. I never felt that things weren't said because I was there, and occasionally, I felt awkward when people I knew were being talked about. On one occasion I was asked to leave the room when a disciplinary matter was being dealt with in cabin services.

As my relationship with the bank was not quite so easy I decided to drop the request for shadowing which I had made at the initial stages of the project. My liaising contact there did not have a high enough standing in the bank to be able to arrange it for me and, as a lot of the information during meetings is of a confidential nature, I knew that kind of access would be harder to secure.

ETHICS

There were two main ethical issues that I had to deal with during this piece of research. Both pertain to the interviews, with the first concerning how honest I was in discussing the central tenent of my research. In the letters which I sent to potential interviewees I said that I was researching organisational culture and omitted the interest in women as I did not want to load the interview before it started, and I thought it may prevent certain men from seeing me. This may place my research methods in the box of covert methods although I was totally open with my access contacts. I brought in the gender angle as and when I thought it appropriate - often on the first phone call to women, which usually made them more interested, or with

men when we got into the interview room and they asked what it was all about, although with some I hardly mentioned it at all. The airline employees are very self reflective, having been through huge culture change and they were very familiar with the concept of culture and indeed with gender issues. The bank employees were less receptive to issues of gender and I played it (gender) down there. However, here were only a few men and indeed one woman with whom gender was hardly discussed at all because I sensed hostility to the subject. Far from being unproductive, these interviews gave me a truer flavour of what life was like in the organisation.

The second ethical issue concerned my treatment of the data. I had to be aware, for instance, that there was a certain amount of anxiety over confidentiality and what I would do with the information given that my respondents knew I was writing a report for the company. I am sure that this had much more of an effect in the bank, where the women were fewer and farther between, much more identifiable and where conditions were quite hostile to women. I have to accept that my insistence on being an objective researcher might not always have been believed by my respondents given the fact that I was writing reports for the companies. Protecting their identity yet at the same time wanting their criticisms to be made known to the company was quite difficult.

It was feminist critiques that threw up the ethical implications in being involved in studies where people reveal a lot personally (Finch 1983). Finch acknowledged that she had to treat the information given to her with great care - her clergy wives were, on the whole, not feminist and many of them expressed contentment with their lives. Her task was then to put these seemingly conservative results into a feminist perspective. Stacey has held this feminist ethnographic approach to severe criticism.

She argues that the greater the intimacy, and the more the apparent mutuality of the researcher/researched relationship, the greater is the danger. Following an unfortunate incident in her own research, Stacey notes.

> Indeed the irony I now perceive is that the ethnographic method exposes subjects to far greater danger and exploitation than do the positivist, abstract and 'masculinist' research methods. (Stacey 1994 p.198)

There is certainly some truth in what she says. How can feminist researchers accurately record the profoundly non-feminist statements of their subjects? How much is their loyalty to women generally or to their particular relationship with the informant? These were some of the issues that I grappled with but, although I enjoyed many of my interviews and protected their identities, my interviewees all knew that the information was mine. No one asked me not to use the information they had given me but, if they had, then it would have been a dilemma. In the end the material is to be used by the researcher, it belongs to her. Although my research matter was feminist informed, my subjects were not powerless people for whom I had to take responsibility. They were all extremely intelligent, well educated, well paid professionals who were more often that not occupying the powerful seat in the interview.

DATA ANALYSIS

All taped interviews were transcribed. Because of the semi-structured nature of the interviews, topics were relatively easy to find and I went through the transcripts topic by topic (constituents), making notes on each section. The open ended answers were typed up and I identified recurring themes. The questionnaires, which had been coded, were put onto SPSS and analysed, using significance tests.

Concluding Points

Given the available time and resources I think my mix of methods worked well. In my favour was my background knowledge of business which meant that I could immediately relate to most of my respondents on one level or another.

The mix of survey and interviews enabled me to get some figures and then relate them to the qualitative material. Although the length of the questionnaire looked prohibitive it gave me enormous amounts of detailed information thanks to the good response rate. The small numbers of women in the bank made comparisons difficult but the questionnaires enabled me to compile a valuable bank of information about the respondents e.g their marital status, children, length of career etc. It was most helpful for information about the working day, numbers of meetings, home/work conflict and attitudes to working mothers and women managers, giving me enough data to form some generalisations, which would have been impossible from my small number of interviews. However, it was through talking to people in the organisations that I was able to build up a picture of how the business worked and what it was like to work there. I was very fortunate that so many senior people gave me their time to be interviewed and were open and honest with a complete stranger. The shadowing gave me an opportunity to witness a bit more of everyday life at the airline, to meet different people and see relationships at first hand. I found it was a great way to be an accepted part of the proceedings, particularly as I was always with a senior manager, yet at the same time retain the luxury of being an observer.

CHAPTER THREE

ORGANISATIONAL AWARENESS OF GENDER

INTRODUCTION

I have included organisational awareness of gender as one of my constituents of organisational culture because attitudes to gender pervade the workplace and influence the men and women who work there. This chapter looks at the ways in which both the organisations and the managers viewed gender. What was the level of awareness around the issues of women working and was there a culture of equality? Do equal opportunities make a difference in an organisation? The implementation of equal opportunities policies may act as an indicator of gender awareness. However, organisations may be gender aware without an equal opportunity policy and this would be transmitted through the attitudes expressed by men and women in the organisation. This chapter deals specifically with the organisations' history of employing women, their equal opportunity policies, overt support for women from the organisation, as well as men's and women's views of women managers, how women themselves are received in the workplace and whether respondents think that their organisation creates a culture which encourages and nurtures women in their careers. It also explores the ways women themselves articulate gender issues according to the discourses they have available to them. Although all the constituents of organisational culture which I have identified have an indirect or direct impact on gender, it is important to look at the history and specific situation of gender relations in the organisation.

Below I discuss some of the debates on equal opportunities, to place the research data in some context. To what degree an organisation embraces both the ethos of

equal opportunities and backs them up with an investment in sound policies may be expected to have an impact on both the progress of women in management and their experience in the workplace in that organisation.

Both organisations would profess to having a culture of equality. The bank professes to not differentiating between men and women - denying that inequality and discrimination may exist, whereas the airline recognises some of women's differences and accepts that discrimination against women does exist and tries, through policies, to remedy it. Did women appreciate either culture of equality and in what ways may either culture be exclusionary to women?

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES, COMPOSITION, DEBATES AND CURRENT TRENDS

Introduction

Equality legislation came into force in the UK in 1975 in the form of the Equal Pay Act (passed in 1970 but came into force in 1975) which provided for equal pay for men and women working for equivalent work, and the Sex Discrimination Act 1975. The Equal Pay Act was amended in 1983 in order to comply with Article 119 of the Treaty of Rome and the Directives on Equal Pay and Equal Treatment to provide for claims to equal pay for work of equal value. UK Sex Discrimination legislation prohibits both direct and indirect discrimination. A third area of legislation which has undergone progressive changes is law pertaining to maternity rights. Most recently the Trade Union Reform and Employment Rights Act 1993 makes dismissal of a woman because she is pregnant unfair and ensures that all pregnant women have the right to fourteen weeks maternity leave and offered suitable alternative work on return to work after the birth .

The European Union has been a major influence on the development of equality law in the face of reluctance of the UK to extend rights beyond the minimum or to redress any anomalies of original law e.g. extending employment protection rights to part time workers in 1995, extending maternity provisions to all pregnant women, the 1991 EEC directive on sexual harassment (Rubinstein 1997). Individuals in the UK may bring legal claims on the basis of Article 119 and the EEC Directives which gives them greater rights than those accorded by domestic laws.

This legal background, which in practice makes any redress lengthy and costly, is nevertheless an important influence over employers. Restriction on the amount of compensation for discrimination, previously set at a maximum of £11,000, was ruled contrary to EEC law and this has led to successful claims being potentially very expensive to employers.

Whilst this legislation affects all organisations in the UK, those who employ many women have embraced a further set of voluntary policies known as 'family friendly' policies. The combination of the demographic time bomb - fewer young male workers -and the rapid development of the service sector has made demands on women's labour during the late seventies and eighties and many organisations have promoted flexible working packages for mothers, such as 'school hours only' and 'term time' only contracts. Legislation and, at least, the rhetoric of equal opportunity is now part of many organisations' and indeed society's culture.

Limits to equality legislation

Fundamental Flaws

The neglect of part time workers (to some extent later rectified by the application of a new EEC directive) and the persistence of occupational segregation (which the

equal value clause (1983) tried to ameliorate), combined with the inability to bring class actions tempered the impact of the equality legislation. However, the wages gap did close from 63% to 74% in the years between 1970 and 1977, and then a further six points over the next eighteen years to 80%. (Hourly earnings, full time only) [1]

But it is the philosophical underpinnings of the law which point to more fundamental flaws and need to be understood to explain why the majority of women are still found in the lower echelons of organisations. Twenty five years after the first equality legislation in Britain, only a handful of women have reached the top in their professions and organisations (Hansard 1990). Research has shown that at the beginning of their careers women with qualifications may start off at the same level as men but they quickly fall behind.[2](MccGwire 1992; Institute of Management 1994; Rigg and Sparrow 1994). Among the CBI' s top 200 companies, women were only 6.7% of top management and 81% had no women directors at all on their main boards (Hansard 1990). The influx of women into management and the professions is made up of young single women and time will tell if this group succeed in progressing to the top.

Equality legislation was premised on the liberal ideology of fairness, and treated the discrimination of women in organisations as an aberration of rationality. Thus its approach was specifically focused on enabling women to take up their positions in organisations alongside men, and aimed to eradicate discrimination in selection and recruitment, by making it unlawful. Trying to create conditions for women to

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[1]Calculated from the New Earnings Survey,1970,1974,1977,1981,1986,1991,1995 (Walby 1997 p.31)
[2] Jackson and Hush (1991) 'Women Managers and Career Progression; The British Experience' Women in Management Reviews and Abstracts 6 (2) pp.10-11.

compete with men 'on a level playing field' assumes that the structure of work and organisations themselves are in some way neutral, unaffected by gender and need not be questioned. It is merely "giving women an equal chance under the men's rules" (Corcoran-Nantes and Roberts 1995).

Research into the gendered nature of work reveals how masculine even the very notion of work is, and that the whole working day is suited around the lives of men (Smith 1987; Acker 1990), whose domestic lives are taken care of for them by women and whose time is made available to them by women. Research on women managers reveals the stresses that women suffer adapting to a male working pattern and frequently carrying the dual role of work and family (Tanton 1994; Lewis and Lewis 1996; Coe 1991; Davidson 1991; Hochschild 1997).

The other approach of the equality movement is based on the premise that women are different from men and require different treatment. It aims to 'help' women with domestic responsibilities with a basket of 'family friendly' packages, like maternity leave, part-time work and career breaks. As such, many women with ambition do not embrace it . The problem for women is that if they want to remain on the same level as men, they cannot take advantage of these policies - or more likely they may not be offered them. In her study of women managers Coe found only 1% of women managers in her survey worked part time (Coe 1992), compared to the nearly 50% of total women workers. In America it has given rise to the 'mommy track' which signals to the organisation that the woman involved has put her career on hold and is not in the running for promotion.

The introduction of family friendly policies may have met a need but it also meant that men could ignore the issue. Although some family friendly policies in the

nineties have broadened their target to include both men and women in their programmes, there is no evidence that men are spending more time raising their children.

Indeed there was no need for men to be problematised by either approach of equal opportunities, nor was there any need to change organisational structures and ways of working. On top of these general but fundamental limits to the changes which Equal Opportunities could make, there have been other specific factors which have limited the success of the policies.

Restructuring

The impact of restructuring of companies and the emphasis on flexibility has had implications for equal opportunities. A recent study found that restructuring led to job losses in functions where women were concentrated and that it reinforces exclusion from the valuable informal organisational networks that provide access to career development opportunities unless the restructuring involves an increase in managerial positions (Woodall, Edwards and Welchman 1997).

> Because organisational restructuring most commonly exhibits 'downsizing' and 'delayering' the underlying aim of Opportunity 2000 of 'rebalancing' the workforce is overshadowed by general concerns over who loses their job, and the nature of the new work roles. (Woodall, Edwards and Welchman 1997 p.7)

Culture

Equal opportunity issues are rarely made a priority in a given culture model and, as such, are often overshadowed by other concerns. This is particularly important as the cultural environment of the organisation has been cited as one of the most important variables determining the success of equal opportunity policies. (Hansard

1990; Coe 1991; Corcoran-Nantes and Roberts 1995; Hammond 1993). Embedded, taken-for-granted values in a culture like length of service, loyalty and commitment and serving long hours can act against equality policies. Culture change of any kind is hard (Denison 1990; Handy 1985; Meek 1988) and the success of equal opportunities rests on the complementary shift in cultural values and attitudes (Hammond and Holton 1991).

Resistance

Cockburn demonstrates clearly the resistance by men to equal opportunities programmes in her book *In The Way of Women* (1991). Buswell and Jenkins use qualitative data (1994) to illustrate how the operation of two patriarchal strategies, the 'denial of inequality' and the manipulation of time, have acted to damage women's chances in organisations. They specifically blame equal opportunities policies for enabling these strategies to come into being, by allowing men to deny that inequality exists once a 'policy' is in force, and at the same time simultaneously redefining the 'good worker' as the one who gives most time to the organisation. These strategies can be seen as a response to equal opportunities and ways in which gains by women can be constrained.

Another major factor in limiting the success of equal opportunities policies, then, is that companies have failed to implement them. In 1988 a British Insititute of Management survey of 350 member organisations showed that, although, about half had a commitment to equal opportunities, less than one third were taking active steps to ensure they were put into practice (MccGwire 1992).

Opportunity 2000 and the Business Case

Opportunity 2000 - Towards a Balanced Workforce - is a government-backed campaign to increase the numbers of women in management in this country. It has always stressed the business case for equal opportunity for women and it has pursued this through a culture change model. The economic argument for equal opportunities emphasises the potential of women workers, the particular skills they possess which may help in developing the business and the wasted investment in training women who then leave the organisation for family or other reasons (Marshall 1995). It finds favour particularly in the private sector, where the original ideas of social justice sit uneasily with notions of maximum profitability. So, saying that employing women and more importantly retaining them makes sound economic sense has far more appeal to the business community than complaining about discrimination.

> The business case will remain the most effective argument for equality in 1995. (Kamlesh Bahl, Chair , EOC Report, 1995)

> The case for making a strategic priority of the pursuit of equal opportunities grows year by year for business. A comprehensive approach widens not only the talent available to the business, but its understanding of the market place and its links with the community on which it depends. (Howard Davies, Director General CBI 1996, quoted in the EOC Report,1995)

However, the limits to the business case are illustrated by the fact that, within its Career Break Scheme, the Midland Bank announced that

> Due to the changed business and economic climate from 1996 the bank is no longer able to offer a separate scheme for management.(Lewis, Watts and Camp 1996 p.104)

The limits of the business case is also apparent in my second case study where competition for jobs was so intense that there was little pressure to make an effort to keep women, however well trained they were. The limits of the business case is also apparent when the business imperative does not necessarily coincide with the interests of women managers, e.g. in times of restructuring (see above).

Diversity

The appeal of the business case has been accompanied by a similar turn to diversity, another 'non-political' and business sense-making concept. The Opportunity 2000 campaign (1991) coincided with a tide of despondency over the limits of equal opportunities initiatives and the turn to different approaches of 'conceptualising fairness' in the workplace. Some organisations have moved away from equal opportunities to diversity, which values difference in the workforce. The focus is not specifically on women, nor even on inequality, but fits in with the current trend in management for a HRM approach, which speaks of capabilities, potential and empowerment. It encompasses every form of difference - age, disability, race, religion yet does not recognise inequality to these differences. Diversity is perceived as benefiting the organisation, whereby equality programmes were often seen as favouring one group over another. The anti-group stance reflects the postmodern trend of valuing difference and reflects criticism made within the feminist movement that mainstream approaches were neglecting many groups of women. Diversity's appeal lies in its evident acceptance of difference and fits neatly into the idea that there are different styles of working. It is argued that the equality approach, based on gender neutrality, aimed at helping women to be like men and to compete on their terms. Diversity, it is argued, allows for difference and in fact celebrates it. But,

as Liff (1996) points out, there is a need to do more than merely acknowledge difference. How can these differences be equitably valued?

The diversity emphasis is very much on the individual and the potential they bring to the organisation (Kandola, Fullerton and Ahmed 1995). Littlewoods, one of the first companies to promote equal opportunity policies in this country, recently announced that Equal Opportunities was seen as an initiative which favoured women and ethnic minorities at the expense of white men (Opportunity 2000 Report 1997). There is a naive supposition that their hopes for diversity will be met by organisations in a way that equality programmes have failed. Of course, what is at issue here is changing underlying power relations.

> The significance of acknowledging diversity is to see that it is not a case of the happy existence of neutral difference, but that it is bound up with power relations (this is totally neglected by recent literature on the subject) whereby masculine codes are rewarded more highly than feminine in organisations, therefore rationalising and justifying continued male dominance. (Rigg and Sparrow 1994 p.34)

The move to diversity can be seen as part of a backlash to women's gains in the area of employment (Oakley and Mitchell 1997).

Mainstreaming

Mainstreaming is now the buzz word, used in the EC and increasingly in UK companies. The Institute of Personnel Management has announced its new approach to mainstreaming (Equal Opportunities Review Jan/Feb 1997). Mainstreaming signifies a push towards systematic procedures and mechanisms within organisations - particularly government and public instititutions - for explicitly taking account of

gender issues at all stages of policy making, programme design and implementation. It also represents a call for the diffusion of responsibility for gender issues beyond the small and underfunded women's units to the range of sectoral and technical departments within institutions. Some feminist groups are worried about the emphasis on minutiae of procedures rather than goals -and the trend has been criticised as co-opting grass roots activists and depoliticising the issues. (Baden and Goetz 1997).

MY RESEARCH

The purpose of this part of the research was to identify the ways in which gender awareness in an organisation affected women managers. It looks at the intersection of business needs and gender and reflects on the relationship between the two. I needed to ask about the history of women's employment in the organisations and the history, if any, of its equal opportunities policies. What was the awareness in the organisation of gender issues? How much were business needs behind the equality issues? Looking at culture change in my first case study, what were the implications for women through it and the restructuring that was occurring? Through what channels were women's needs represented in each organisation, one with an equal opportunities policy and one without, and what were the attitudes towards women managers? How were women workers women managers? What did the women themselves think about the cultures - were they supportive of women or not? The bank was I think unusual in that equal opportunities was not on the company agenda at all. In this respect I had a fairly unique chance of comparing an organisation politicised in equal opportunities and gender issues with one that was still in the dark about it all.

METHODS

The information on the airline's equal opportunities came from discussion with the previous equality officer who had been responsible for implementing them at their inception. To a great extent the rest of my data for this chapter comes from my interviewees and my time spent in the organisations. How managers talked, how they treated me, their secretaries and how they discussed other managers gave strong indications of how they viewed gender. It should be noted here again that often my interviewees were not told beforehand that I was studying gender. My letter only mentioned organisational culture so I had to bring the subject of gender up at appropriate moments in the interviews. Very often during interviews with women, particularly in the airline, the subject of how women got on was brought up by the interviewee. I would sometimes explore the issues more if I felt the interviewee was happy to discuss them (male or female). My success in gaining information relied for the most part on the interviewee relaxing sufficiently to talk about their own experiences in the organisation and very often information which was relevant to gender was divulged without me having to ask specifically about it. A lot of my information as to how women managers were perceived was given unintentionally by the men during interviews.

The questionnaire was more upfront and included questions which tried to gauge how women were thought of in the organisation e.g. What effect do women managers have on the workplace? How good were relations between men and women? Have you experienced any hostility or been made to feel unwelcome in an area of the organisation because of your gender? Have you been excluded from a particular job because of gender? The questionnaire for the airline also included a question on awareness of the organisation's equal opportunities policy. I wanted to

ascertain the level of awareness of gender issues of both the organisation and the individuals. I also asked an open-ended question on whether the organisations were doing enough to create a culture which encouraged and nurtured women in their careers. The concept of discourse, as being what may be said of something at any particular time, is used in the analysis to illustrate how people can only interpret their own experiences through the discourses available to them. Hegemonic discourses are those which are privileged in any given situation, because of the existence of pre-discoursal power relations.

RESULTS SERCO

The managerial career structure at the bank was divided into three levels - manager, assistant director and director, and I included all three levels in my sample. I investigated the three main divisions, SIM, which was the investment management arm, SSEC, the securities division, and ECFD, the corporate finance division.

Table 3i **All Serco women managers as a percentage of division**

DIVISION	WOMEN .
SSEC (Securities)	9 % (5 out of 54)
ECFD (Corporate Finance)	12 % (6 out of 58)
SIM (Investment Management)	21% (32 out of 150)

Breakdown of levels.

SSEC -Securities

Level	Women
Directors	15% (2 out of 13)
Assistant directors	0%
Managers	20% (4 out of 20)

ECFD- Corporate Finance

Level	Women
Directors	4% (1 out of 25)
Assistant directors	14% (3 out of 22)
Managers	20% (4 out of 20)

SIM - Investment division

Level	Women
Directors	15% (6 out of 40)
Assistant directors	21% (10 out of 47)
Managers	24% (16 out of 67)

Serco and Equal Opportunities

Merchant banks (I use this term synonomously with investment bank) have had very few female employees in their history apart from secretaries and support clerical staff. Unlike the retail banks which employed thousands of people to fill their branches, a high number of which have always been women, merchant banks have no branch network and have been relatively small in terms of numbers of employees. Serco now employs 3,000 people world-wide and this has increased fourfold over

the past fifteen years. The expansion since Big Bang in 1986, when merchant banks increased their range of financial services as well as expanded abroad, has led to a broadening of their workforce at the professional level. Entry at graduate level has always been intensely competitive and merchant banks, along with the Civil Service, have always had their pick of undergraduates, concentrating their recruitment from Oxford and Cambridge. Its image used to be grey, dusty and gentlemanly, although since the eighties this has been accompanied by a new masculine image of aggressive young bloods (McDowell 1997). Even now, as one young woman said

> Not many women think about the City as an option after university, and most of us who have ended up here have some connection with it, through perhaps our fathers or uncles working here. Women with no prior knowledge of the City often fall by the wayside early on as they cannot put up with the male dominated environment. Those of us who have grown up with it can fit in more easily.(Female Manager SIM)

The huge growth in the investment industry and the liberalisation of the market post Big Bang has meant that the City has had to cast its net wider for employees. Background and university college do not hold as much sway as they used to and intellectual ability can take priority over both. This liberalisation of the market has opened up opportunities for women and for some men who may not share the same upper middle class background as traditional merchant bankers. The employment of women has been, then, a consequence of the need to employ the best resources from a pool of highly qualified labour. The increase in women's educational achievements means that very often they are, on paper, the best person for the job. Increasing awareness of equal opportunities throughout education has undoubtedly led to more women wanting a professional career and aspiring to some of the highly sought after graduate positions. A huge surge in the numbers of women entering the professions of accountancy and law has occurred over the past fifteen years (Evetts

1994). It has not been so marked in the City, perhaps because there is little in the way of career structure, so promotion is more discretionary than in a professional arena and women have shown a desire to gain a qualification which justifies career progression (Crompton and Sanderson 1990). Lack of career guidance and lack of training were the most cited barriers to career progress by women in this case study.

Once recruited, women are expected to compete on the same terms as men. The organisational philosophy was gender neutral, espousing the free market values of 'it doesn't matter whether you are male or female, as long as you do your job well and bring in the business.' The prioritising of free market values by businesses of this kind can be a serious impediment to progress for women. This gender neutrality or blindness actually masks practices which may inhibit and marginalise women, making it hard for both men and women to see them as obstacles. Numbers of women employed are as yet too small for the bank to feel any need to formulate policy on maternity pay, which is state minimum, part time work or other benefits to working mothers. There were complaints about the lack of maternity provision by some of the women, considering the vast profitability of the bank, and this was taken as lack of commitment to the women who worked there and as a sign that the bank did not really care whether or not the women stayed on after having a baby. There is no formulated policy on equal pay or recruitment or sexual harassment. I was told that a statement on equal opportunities did exist somewhere but the personnel manager was unable to locate it.

Equal Opportunities issues arose out of reasons of social justice, something which sits uneasily alongside most businesses. Writers and practitioners have recently directed their challenges through the 'business' case which argues that a company which invests money and time in training women has 'business' interests in keeping

them (Opportunity 2000 Report 1994; Holtermann 1997). But Serco has had no need to formulate the questions, let alone think of solutions. The competitiveness of the market and the job insecurity which has plagued the City since Big Bang in 1986 means that people tend to hang on to their jobs at any cost. There is no desperate need to hold on to women who find themselves under pressure - despite the cost of training them. As one woman said

> Why should they care about me or my baby ? There are plenty of men who could do my job and are probably waiting in line for it. (Female Manager SSEC)

There has been no internal pressure from its women employees, nor the external pressure from the labour market, to address any issues of gender. There is no discourse of equal opportunities at this bank and the gender blind approach of the bank means that women's voices and experiences go unheard. Fear of voicing worries and criticism meant that some women refused to answer my questionnaire in case they were identified. I found it quite staggering that highly qualified and intelligent men I spoke with had never even considered the underlying issues around employing women. They either approached the subject as the no difference 'gender blind' approach which goes, 'I have no prejudice against women as long as they work as hard as men', or they emphasised that women were different - 'the problem with women is that their biology is different, they do go off and have babies', and very often they utilised both discourses at the same time. Roper noted that men used ideologies promoting marriage and motherhood to minimise competition with women.

> The supposedly fixed character of the gender order served as a reason for leaving resistance to women managers within the unconscious, unseen and therefore unchallenged. (Roper1994 p.199)

Individual Problems and Superwomen

Without an available equal opportunities discourse women's problems are treated as individual difficulties rather than organisational issues. One senior woman has had to leave because of harassment and bullying by a long standing director. She tried to tackle it herself and the personnel director was sympathetic but unable to take on the director, who had far more allies in the bank than she did. In the end she joined a competing team in another merchant bank and only when she was settled in her new job did she return to tell the chairman of the bank what had happened. To have done so beforehand may have resulted in her becoming persona non grata in the small world of project finance. The chairman showed genuine concern but the matter stopped there. Other women have recently left because of the pressures working long hours and coping with family life. Again these cases were cited to me as individual problems. There was almost universal acceptance that merchant banking was a man's world and that women had to adapt. It was the job, not the men, which made life difficult for women. We can see here hegemony at work, with the masculinity of the job appearing to all as natural.

Thus, the prevailing view was that only really exceptional women could cope with life at the top of the bank and their exceptional natures were constantly highlighted. In the absence of any discussion of power and vested interests, explanations as to women's success or lack of it often drift towards psychologizing and the conclusion that individuals themselves are to blame for their position and that they should overcome all obstacles including negative attitudes. When the topic of women arose in my interviews it often led to discussions of individual women who had succeeded in the organisation. This discourse of the 'Superwoman' found favour particularly in the bank and more particularly with the men in the bank. Explanations

for women's success or lack of it, setting aside the practical considerations of childcare, often rested on individual psychological traits, usually along the lines of 'she's very tough'. There seemed to me to be a desire by the men to isolate the 'successful' women, simultaneously singing their praises and distinguishing them from other (more ordinary) women. One senior director, discussing the investment management division's female managing director, said

> Women in the organisation? Well. We've got a woman boss, S.....Haven't you met her yet? Do you remember when we first walked into the department there was a little girl sitting at that first desk, talking with another blond girl. Yes, well that was S. Very young, very bright. I've got a lot of time for S. She does an excellent job, extraordinarily clever, you know.(Male Director, SIM)

A little later in the conversation I suggested that S may also be a good role model for other women in the bank. He took exception to this and almost denied that there were any other women who could be good enough to reach the top, saying "Well S is, of course, quite exceptional, yes, quite exceptional ... "

The dialogue above shows how this older man, who worked for S and was thus accountable to her, simultaneously praised her abilities, yet in the same breath referred to her as a little girl, therefore establishing his male superiority, and then proceeded to mark her out as apart from most other women, emphasising her uniqueness and thus 'difference' to other women in the bank. Cynthia Cockburn found the term 'male right' useful in her book, *'In the Way of Women'*, as a way of showing that even when a man is junior to a woman there is some inherent 'right ' through his sex to dominate.

> Men's power in the extra-organisational world, in the family, the state and civil society enters the workplace with them and gives even the most junior

> man a degree of sexual authority relative to even senior women. (Cockburn 1991 p.143)

This contention was illustrated to me by a story from one of the bank women, who had recently left. Two senior women from corporate finance, both in their late thirties, were coming back from lunch and walked past reception. The porter on reception called after them, "Had a nice sandwich and chat, eh, girls?" One of the women concerned, who described this incident to me was aware of the dilemma. She felt irritated but to complain looked 'uppity' and rather pathetic. After all, the porter was just 'being friendly'. My interpretation of this episode is that the porter's use of terminology conveyed a lack of respect to them which establishes his own superiority as a male against these two highly paid senior women who, when all said and done, were just a couple of girls. This kind of incident, I suggest, occurs all the time and is hard to categorise as sexual harassment because the nature of it is not sexually based - it is however anti-woman, a term that is rarely put on any agenda of equal opportunities.

The stereotype of superwoman as a worker who also maintains traditional domestic functions was also prevalent in both case studies. The general message is that only the exceptional women can cope and thus all should strive to be exceptional rather than question the basis of striving. Most organisations contain their own superwomen . The bank's most super 'superwoman' was not in fact the M.D. of the investment division (described above), rather it was the only female senior corporate finance director, who had five children. Male directors loved to bring this example down from the shelf whenever the subject of women in the bank was raised.

> She is amazing, I've no idea how she does it. But she brings in the business. That's all we ask. (Director, ECFD)

This woman represented a rather fearsome figure in the minds of men. Her evident fertility - her youngest child was only one year old - was disconcerting among the lofty rooms of the seventh floor. And yet she could not be faulted on her business results. (See chapter on public/private). I was expecting a large matriarchal figure but found her a stressed, thin, hyperactive woman, who did everything incredibly quickly, including talking. Her 'ability' meant that she often had to get up at four in the morning to catch up on work. She disliked being held up as a role model and said that she was very unusual in her desire to combine such a large family and work life, and would actually warn other younger women against it. So, in this way, she also added to this stereotype that to do well as a woman here you had to be 'different'.

How women saw themselves

Without a discourse on equal opportunities, the women in the bank discussed various problems that women might have in the organisation in a very fragmented way, accepting them almost as natural. Because of the seniority of women I was interviewing, one of the 'obstacles' many of them had faced was difficulty in gaining promotion. And the most oft cited barriers to career progress for women were lack of training and lack of career guidance. Through these channels, women felt more comfortable and justified in expressing some resentment although it was discussed as though it was an unalterable fact of organisational life. In all the divisions except for SIM the women agreed that it was harder for them to get promoted. There were all kinds of explanations as to why this should be.

> You've got to be a good team player and a good business getter - but perceptions of women (wrong) that they are not business getters, adds to holding them back on promotion. (Female Ass. Director ECFD)

Promotion is difficult for a woman, there is still a very definite attitude of 'Yes, but they are going off to have babies'. Or, 'We can't have a woman because we need someone who's a hustler, someone who's tougher.' (Female Manager ECFD)

Everyone wants to be a director. If you don't make it generally you leave, so there is intense competition among your peer group. Women tend to have to wait longer. Men promote in their own image. You need to be ambitious and determined and put yourself forward - be proactive, perhaps project yourself more than most women would normally do. (Female Ass. Director ECFD)

The biggest single asset in this business is confidence. Men are given confidence, particularly certain schooling backgrounds which bestow confidence (Public schools). Women on the whole are taught self-doubt, not confidence. If you don't naturally have high expectations of yourself, you have to create this attribute in yourself, because the men here already have it. (Female Ass.director IPD)

I was quite lucky, in that I came in from another department and didn't really have a direct peer group so my promotions perhaps caused less resentment than they might have done. (Female Director SIM)

This last woman spoke as though resentment to a woman's promotion by her peer group would be expected. Promotion in the high status realms of corporate finance was particularly hard to come by as the statistics show.

> Men feel more comfortable promoting people who are like themselves. That's life - they all do that. (Female Manager EFCD)

What is displayed in this data is a series of stereotypes of working women, an insistence on the bank and its work as being gender-neutral, yet an implicit acknowledgement of its maleness by women's acceptance of the difficulties of gaining promotion. It illustrates the denial of inequality with a combination of biological and psychological factors given to explain the absence of women in senior

ranks of the organisation. In the absence of an equal opportunities discourse then, women's difficulties were individualised by men and channelled by the women themselves into alternative discourses like promotion chances, which conveyed many different injustices. It was the work itself, rather than men, which posed problems for the women. To further illustrate this gender-neutral approach, the male respondents had few thoughts on the effect of women managers in the workplace, as though they had not noticed them, whereas the women themselves felt they had a positive effect on the workplace.

Table 3ii What effect do women managers have on the Serco workplace?

	Positive (nos.)		Negative	No effect	Sample size
Male respondents %	29%	(6)	10%(2)	62%(13)	21
Female respondents %	77%	(27)	3%(1)	20%(7)	36

77% of all women respondents thought that women managers had a positive effect on the workplace, with 20% saying they had no particular effect, compared to only 28% of all men respondents who thought women had a positive effect on the workplace and 62% saying they had no particular effect. These figures illustrate the wide differential between the men and the women as to their views on women in the workplace- very different from the case of the airline (see below).

Womens own feelings regarding their reception in Serco

- **14 %** of women had felt unwelcome in some parts of the bank.

- **19%** of women said that they felt they had been excluded from a job because of their gender.

On the whole women reported relations between men and women as good with,

- **31 %** of women saying they were excellent and **64%** saying they were good.

In a breakdown of the sexes, a higher percentage of women said relations were excellent than did men, but equally some said they were only adequate whereas all the men replied either excellent or good. Both men and women here shared a lot in common in terms of education and background and, indeed, as I point out elsewhere in the research, many marriages were made here - I came across six individuals whose married partners also worked in the bank.

> Most of the men are quite good in their treatment of women. The senior level realise that women can do very well at their jobs, particularly like broking. They are often popular and are perceived as being more conscientious, more trustworthy than their male counterpart. (Female Manager, SSEC)

There is, then, a paradox that, in an organisation which would be viewed by many on the outside and, indeed, many on the inside as hostile to women, women are reporting excellent relations with the men they work with. A lower percentage of women in the bank than in the airline reported feelings of being unwelcome or excluded from a job because of their gender. This corresponds to the lower reported levels of sexual harassment in the bank compared to the airline. This may be because there is greater sensitivity to gender issues in the airline because of its awareness as an organisation. Perhaps where women do not pose a threat in numbers there is less liklihood of resistance by men. Yet, in the bank also, I heard enough rumblings from women to know that however well they got on with Y on their desk, they did not all accept the status quo.

> Many company directors would probably rather be dealing with their old buddy who was at Eton with them or whatever, but it is changing, very slowly, but it is changing. (Female Manager ECFD)

In ECFD there were so few women that they stood out as outsiders in what felt like a gentleman's club. Yet for women this can be an advantage in business terms.

> In Chemicals it is an advantage in a way. I mean, there are not many women in the industry full stop. So people tend to remember my name and ask for me. (Female Manager ECFD)

The management style here is reserved and women are on the surface treated well.

> There is no overt difference between men and women in our department, no obvious harassment like on the trading floors. Women are treated politely and with respect. The differences are subtle, just the way men talk together, you can feel excluded. It's hard to identify when things are out of order. I would describe it more as discomfort. If you are in a discussion with men and it's a hearty, jolly chaps atmosphere, it doesn't matter what the conversation is about, they have a way of making you feel unwanted. It's not deliberate. (Female Manager ECFD)

SIM -Investment Management

The investment division had the highest percentage of women managers. Fifteen years ago, investment management had something of a dull image, with fund managers beavering away reading research material and making their investment decisions, with their long lunches with brokers as the highlight of their day. They were always paid less than brokers and, characteristically, were more steady, sensible and reliable. It was the first area that women really broke into in merchant banks.

> I suppose they thought they could plonk women in there, out of sight and more acceptable. Also, the work is absolutely quantifiable and measurable,

- **58%** per cent of all women respondents in the survey felt that the organisation was not doing enough to create a culture which encouraged women in their careers. But every single male respondent said they thought the bank was doing enough to create a culture which encouraged women in their careers

DIVISIONAL DIFFERENCES

ECFD -European Corporate Finance Division

It is worth looking more closely at this division because it holds the highest status of all bank divisions and there are very few women there. One of the most senior male directors in ECFD told me that they had 'lots of women now', whereas in reality the figures are very low. This was a further example of the reluctance of the men in the bank to recognise the presence, or not, of women, and the lack of awareness around the whole issue. It is akin to the paternalistic culture described by Maddock and Parkin (1993) which bodes well for women who keep their place, and as seen here may allow for exceptions, but they are always exceptions. The clubby atmosphere of corporate finance, with its history of public school educated males unused to women's company at work, has made it hard for women to join. Fifteen years ago many of the merchant banks refused to recruit women into corporate finance, giving clients' reluctance to deal with women as the excuse. The key to being a successful corporate financier is in establishing good relationships with very senior directors like chief executives/chairmen of public companies - obviously likely to be men. A corporate financier offers advice to these people, and, during mergers and takeovers, close relationships are formed. Corporate finance has been the last bastion of male chauvinism in the City, the most tightly-held male stronghold and as one woman said

> either a fund has performed well or it hasn't and this has, I think, also worked in women's favour. The results are more important than how it is done. (Female Director SIM)

This was the key explanation to why women were to found in investment management - the job could be measured, there were few blurred areas for discretionary promotion. Also, the hours have always been more regular as there are fewer emergency meetings which are associated with corporate finance and there is less emphasis on relationships. Graduates of investment banks generally train as investment analysts and then progress to fund management. When they first started recruiting women twenty years ago this is the route the majority of women would have taken. Recruitment into corporate finance is more varied and entrants usually have a professional qualification first i.e. accountancy or law. In the last ten years a fund manager's image has undergone a transformation. Their role in the performance of the fund is emphasised more, and their status and pay have been increased considerably. In spite of the influx of women into the division, SIM is now the star performer of the bank, which goes against most historical cases which show that work areas are devalued when women enter them (Legge 1989).

SSEC -Securities

There was only a handful of women in this division. The new head of UK and European sales, a woman with small children, arrived during my research time and was the only woman on that side. The other women all worked in the research department, where analytical and intellectual skills were more important than selling skills.

I noted that some of the more successful women in this case study were 'outsiders' in another sense besides their gender. One of the senior women was from a lower class than most of the other managerial men and women. A number of other women were foreign citizens. It is only my hypothesis but, in some ways, their difference explained their success or, more relevantly, their acceptance, in as much as they were unlike the wives of many of the men. Linda Mac[illegible]owell also found a high ratio of successful foreign women in her research (1997). The foreign women are not so constrained by aspects of cultural stereotypes deployed in the bank regarding the appropriate roles and behaviours of English women of a certain class.

In SIM women were accepted as managers quite capable of doing the same job as men, only their child bearing potential offered possible difficulties, although the MD herself acted as a role model as a working mother. In SSEC women were concentrated in the research department. Selling, with its overtones of abrasiveness and heavy client socialising, meant that a woman broker was considered unusual, although less so than ten years ago. In ECFD a woman who progressed was considered exceptional in her ability to be ' tough ' and work the ridiculous hours.

RESULTS AIRCO

The statistics in Airco show that they are in line with specific targets set up in the early nineties. I was not given a breakdown for the divisional Management Group.

Table 3iii

Women Managers as a percentage of Airco managers

	(total no.)	Male(no.)	Female (no.)
Senior Managers	(508)	84% (427)	16% (81)
Management Group	(1034)	75% (776)	25% (258)

Table 3 iv Percentage of Women in Senior Management in Airco divisions

Division	Male (no.)	Female(no.)
Cabin Services	68% (32)	32% (15)
Cargo	93% (14)	7% (1)
Human Resources	54% (19)	46% (16)
Finance	80% (64)	20% (16)
Marketing	53% (9)	47% (8)

Airco and Equal Opportunities

The history of equal opportunities in the airline is an interesting case study in itself. As a large employer of women, both in the air and on the ground, it immediately felt the impact of the 1975 Equal Pay and Sex Discrimination Acts. Air stewardesses had previously been sacked if they became pregnant or grounded on reaching the age of

thirty. For the next fifteen years, the airline complied with the law but did little else in promoting their own specific policies. It was at the instigation of the then chief executive, now chairman, that equal opportunities issues were put high on to the organisational agenda. He felt that many of the women in the airline were of a higher calibre than the men and saw the potential to create a higher calibre of employee. He joined up the airline at the inception of Opportunity 2000 and was himself on the steering committee, giving the airline a high profile on the issue. One year later, little was happening and he appointed a full time EO officer and specific objectives were identified. These included targeting the ghettos in the airline where there were very few women at all, like Cargo and Engineering, and updating the old equal opportunities policy manual which had been gathering dust in a drawer in the HR department for years. Key activities were drawn up and these included setting up a steering committee of line managers so that the policies were communicated effectively throughout the organisation, with the chief executive as chair. Trade union involvement was important and helped put childcare on to the agenda, with the setting up of an airline nursery and the organisation of holiday playschemes. Corporate targets for numbers of women in management were set with the specific task of improving representation of women at more senior levels. Time was spent on raising awareness through discussion groups and every manager was sent a personalised copy of the policy statements and targets to stimulate interest. The importance of culture was noted at the beginning of this campaign.

> Equal Opportunities is not only about recruitment and promotion, but also the *atmosphere* in which we all work and to which we all contribute. (Chief Executive 1993 in Airline Equal Opportunities Booklet)

> In a bid to create a *culture* of equality, the airline has adopted a company - wide equal opportunities strategy. (Airline Equal Opportunities Booklet).

They tried to break the barriers that surround flexi-working at a senior level, to promote part-time working and job sharing at senior management level and to make this available for men as well as women. In some ways many of these initiatives became part of the culture quickly. Employing a lot of women was not a new phenomenon for the Airco, so it was a question of upgrading them and encouraging them to pursue managerial careers. A network of equal opportunities representatives, called 'champions' was set up and some of these formed the steering committee. Some of these early goals have been easier to attain than others. Figures for management are encouraging by national standards, although the target for the numbers of women in Management Group is 31% by the year 2000, so there is still some way to go. Yet traditional male strongholds, like Cargo and Engineering, have proved hard to break through. Communication of these issues has been effective as my research shows that every single respondent was aware that the airline had an equal opportunities policy and 85% thought that women managers had a positive effect on the work place.

A job share register has been set up, yet I came across only a couple of senior women who worked part-time, one in HR and one in Marketing. Although the nursery is considered a success by the company, none of the women I interviewed used it because it closed at 5.30pm which was far too early for them to leave work. It was used by lower level women employees and some stewardesses who worked on domestic flights during the day. The test for the continuing impetus of the airline's equal opportunities policy is the arrival of a new Chief Executive. The impetus that the former one put behind the policy has been instrumental in its success. The new Chief Executive has reiterated the company's commitment to EO and some think that EO sits more comfortably with his younger generation than with the previous older one. He is now concentrating his efforts on race

discrimination where figures are not good. During my time there equal opportunities had been given to a more junior woman manager than had previously been the case and she was having a harder time motivating senior managers and keeping the momentum going. However, the welcome I received and the awareness the organisation had around the issues, particularly of harassment, meant I felt that the issues were being kept on the company agenda. My initial contact with the company, a senior manager, has recently been promoted and was expected ultimately to make it on to the main board and she is absolutely committed to EO throughout the company.

Some cynicism was expressed to me through comments about 'helping the statistics', and I came across many women, who had been doing managers' jobs but had remained at the administrative level for ten years, suddenly being promoted to managers in the past five years.

Even though the airline's maternity provisions were only the state minimum, the majority of women (85%), across all divisions, returned to work after childbirth. This is reflected in the average length of service figures. This corresponds with the loyalty and the low staff turnover which is a feature of the airline.

Table 3 v What effect did women managers have on the workplace in Airco?

	positive	negative	neutral
Male respondents (Total 31 - 2 missing)	68% (21)	3%(1)	29% (9)
Female respondents (Total 63 -1missing)	94% (59)	0%	6% (4)

Sample No. 97

The above figures show the overall positive approach (85%) that both men and women in the airline took to women in management. There was a much bigger differential between men and women's responses in the bank than in the airline, and a much bigger percentage of women in the airline thought that women managers had a positive effect on the workplace than women in the bank did. It would appear, then, that a formal equal opportunities policy acted to educate and increase awareness among the men and women in the organisations, as well as to increase the numbers of women in management.

As stated above, all respondents were aware of the equal opportunities policies. However, with the increased awareness of the issues comes an increase in objections that women expressed to certain behaviour. They seemed to be far more sensitive to any sexist behaviour and did not see it as part of the job. Their expectations of respectful equal treatment were much higher than those of the women in the bank. This may explain why there were more reports by women of negative reactions to women in the airline.

- **34%** of all female respondents said that they had felt unwelcome in an area of the organisation on account of their gender and
- **31%** of female respondents said that they had experienced hostility in their work because they were women and
- **24%** said that they had been excluded from a particular job because of their gender.

These figures were fairly high given the airline's stance on equality issues but they may reflect the higher expectations women have in an organisation which professes

to offer equal opportunities. I asked these questions separately from sexual harassment because I think that women can be harassed or face hostile treatment because they are women and the behaviour need not have a sexual content. Harassing, which is not sexually based, is not covered by our equality laws so the interpretation of the law has widened to include any behaviour that is directed to someone on account of his/her sex (sex here being referred to in a biological distinction between men and women). The kind of behaviour I refer to would be leaving someone out of decision making, putting down their ideas, showing them up in front of clients. One woman told me that this had happened to her and I asked her would she call it sexual harassment and she said, 'Well, I know it was because I was a woman'. Bringing a case under sexual harassment with the obvious overtones of sexuality means that a lot of this misogynistic behaviour is going unchecked.

In one of the most macho areas, Cargo, gender relations were quite good and the women who worked there had found a niche they were comfortable with. The earlier familial feel to the division meant that women in certain roles were quite comfortably accommodated. Rather like the bank , the relative paucity of women managers meant that men could ignore the issues. The only senior woman manager in Cargo was considered different and viewed by the other senior men as something like an odd sister, a kind of tomboy. They were also respectful of her success on the shopfloor. Her role as the only woman was becoming less comfortable as some of the new hatchet men, brought in by the M.D., arrived. They did not know her personally and she confessed to feeling sidelined by them in meetings on matters in which she should have been included.

In my survey at Airco

- 53% of all women respondents and

- **43%** of male respondents said that the organisation was <u>not</u> doing enough to create a culture which encouraged and nurtured women in their careers.

The obvious difference here is the comparison of the airline men with the men in the bank, everyone of whom thought the bank was doing enough.

CONCLUSION

This chapter has dealt with the awareness of the organisations and their employees to the issues of gender. I expected to find that the existence of a formal equal opportunities policy would be a reflection, or an indication of that awareness, and in that sense I was right. The airline and its employees were aware of most gender issues as they were expressed within an equal opportunities agenda. This was reflected in the culture, in the way women were represented and talked about. In everyday conversation women were treated with respect, at least in mixed company, and women were expected to perform on a par with men and there seemed little to stop them. The one exception was Cargo, which was still at the stage where the presence of a female manager was unusual.

The formal embracement of equal opportunities does not, however, prevent other cultural means of resistance to women's progress from occurring, as the rest of my research findings show. But women, to a certain extent were empowered by the knowledge that some of their concerns were on the organisation's agenda. At the airline there was a wide-ranging discourse on equal opportunities which included the concepts of sexual harassment and targets, but there was no discourse on feminism. The case then is argued in terms of fairness and equality of rights, rather than on any notion of power, oppression and resistance. An equal opportunities

discourse - which endorses the liberal values of equality and develops a moral tone of shoulds and oughts - can be espoused by both men and women. It can also run alongside other discourses, such as the one of 'competing practical considerations theme' around childcare and maternity which are presented as unalterable facts, appealing to a biological inevitability or the nature of things. People draw on both discourses and do not necessarily see them as mutually exclusive, indeed the contradictions are rarely noted by respondents (Wetherell, Stiven and Potter 1989).

Some of the female respondents in the airline recognised the limitations of the equal opportunities discourse. They felt that the airline should challenge some of the assumptions and alleviate the lot of women struggling under a dual burden but no one questioned the structure of the work they did and the hours that were demanded of them. The operation of a public/private divide neatly permits organisations to distance themselves from 'what people do at home' (see chapter on private/public).

The equal opportunities stance of the airline was reflected in the culture in as much as no one made a big deal about women managers, even senior managers, and sexist behaviour was deemed unacceptable. However the narrow approach of equal opportunities meant that women's dual burden remained invisible as they struggled to work on a par with men.

The airline's reasons for implementing equal opportunities were a mixture of necessity, in as much as they employed a lot of women, combined with the vision of the former chief executive, who saw both the business case for advancing women as well as the injustice caused by discriminating against them. The importance of top management support has been noted by other researchers (Hammond and Holton

1991; Duke 1997). In my own research I am convinced that the relative success, in terms of awareness and numbers of women managers, of the airline's equal opportunities policy was due to the support of the chief executive who actually engineered its development, and whose insistence that it take a high priority ensured that the new values were 'dug' in a very short space of time. Although the introduction of equal opportunity issues at the airline occurred for business reasons as well as others, the business case was not specifically put forward at the time. The former chief executive had recognised that women made good managers and, at that time, the emphasis in the culture was on communication and 'putting people first'.

However, at the time of my research there was some concern among women in the airline that gender issues were slipping down the agenda as the company faced further restructuring and a slightly different cultural push towards making managers more responsible for their decisions with the financial implications of decision making and all support services were being emphasised (see chapter on style). This may be seen as an example of the limits of the business case, in as much as if men are deemed to be better suited for this type of management, the push for better ratios of women managers may stop.

Although the bank had no formal stance on equal opportunities at all, its philosophy was more in keeping with the concept of diversity, with its emphasis on the individual, rather than with the concept of group interests which an equal opportunities discourse allows and this meant that progress or lack of it, difficulties, harassment, slow promotion etc. were attributed to the individual woman as gender was not considered relevant from the start. As Liff (1996) points out, the individualism of the diversity approach can ultimately collapse difference completely, because everyone is different from everyone else. The espousal of free market

values, choosing the best person for the job, either male or female, ignores the real differences in men and women's lives. As one might expect in a bank, the free market discourse prevailed. The presence of some women in the bank gave rise to the notion of equality which was then endorsed by all of the men and some of the women I came across. This denial of inequality again made many of the barriers to women's progress invisible.

By keeping the bank culture free of an equal opportunities discourse, obstacles in women's career paths were individualised and the boy's own territory appeared natural and unchallenged. The hegemonic discourses of biological and psychological difference prevailed in the bank to justify the scarcity of women and this was accepted by many of the women themselves. A culture which represents women as 'naturally' wanting to be at home or 'exceptional' to work in certain areas - like corporate finance or at senior levels or combining work and family - is exclusionary to women. Women are automatically marginalised by representations of working women as superwomen or 'honorary men'.

I mention again here of the paradox of reportedly better relations between the sexes and fewer proportional incidents of being made to feel unwelcome or excluded in the bank than in the airline. The bank culture may well desensitize women to what they may or may not perceive as unwelcome or being excluded or it may be that where women represent little threat in numbers there is less harassment of this kind.

By not looking at gendered power relations, the equal opportunity philosophy was never going to challenge men's power base in the work place but I do not take a totally pessimistic stance on equal opportunities. Research on the progress of women managers in the United States concluded that without the legal and company

enforcement, things would be even worse, given the resistance by men to women managers (Schein 1994). And progress made by feminists in some Australian organisations (Watson 1991, Duke 1997) is evidence that legal, as well as other measures, may effect change. My research makes clear that even accounting for men's resistance to equal opportunities, which may be manifested by manipulation of time, or harassment, or espousal of values which make the combination of family and career impossible, having an equal opportunities policy in place, backed by senior management and with time and money invested in it gives more women more of a chance than an organisation which has none.

My two case studies illustrate how the business case for equal opportunities can work both ways. In the airline there were already a lot of women in the workforce whose potential was not being reached. Training and then maintaining them made good business sense. However, in the bank there was no real business reason for having an equal opportunities policy and it will only be the threat of legal action and the influence of the American banks in the City which will push the UK merchant banks into taking gender issues seriously.

The studies also show how discourses on gender are ultimately controlled by top management. The absence of any feminist informed discourse meant that neither work structures nor men's resistance were ever clearly problematised in either organisation.

CHAPTER FOUR
MANAGEMENT STYLE

INTRODUCTION

Management style is an important part of organisational culture and, as such, I wanted to see whether, or in what ways, different management styles had any effect on women managers. Management style, particularly leadership style, has been debated in management studies and within the women in management literature. In the management literature management style is often interchangeable with culture. Indeed, the classic *Gods of Management* by Charles Handy describes four different management styles and has been considered the bible on corporate culture (1978). My use of the concept management style is restricted to the manner in which the business of an organisation/division is conducted. It may be identified in the decision making processes, communication, hierarchy, reward systems, and by looking at which work attributes are most praised. It makes up one constituent of the overall organisational culture. Organisational culture in the sense I use it is much wider than style, and encompasses geography, artefacts, sexuality, gender composition, time management, the public/private divide and informal socialising.

I will show that management style is influenced by a number of variables including the organisational structure - the nature of the business, the overall cultural history of the organisation and leadership (Schein 1985). Management style is important in as much as the values and assumptions of those who occupy positions of power feed into the creations and perpetuation of organisational culture, norms and practices.

In the women in management literature, management style has been much debated as a possible reason for women not achieving progress on a par with men. In the years following the equal opportunity legislation, there was an emphasis on women managers' sameness to men and their real or perceived difference was regarded by some as the reason for their failure to progess. In this chapter I contribute to the debate on whether men and women manage in the same way with my own findings.

I also want to move this sameness/difference debate into a wider analysis of management styles and to do this I draw on the corporate culture literature. Gender may be but one variable that differentiates management styles and I assess the importance of other variables on difference in style. The literature review moves on to discuss the flourishing area of masculinity in management. Here it is masculinities that are problematised, not women or their styles, and I discuss the usefulness of these approaches to the study of women managers. A discussion of emotion is also included as there is a growing awareness of its role in management. It is important to pay attention to the wider concerns of management and the influence of the economic imperative on management demands, which can sometimes be neglected when solely focusing on gender.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Management as masculine

In his blueprint for bureaucracy Weber emphasised the need for rationality, logic and objectivity in order to eliminate personal feelings and bias from entering organisational thought. Rules and rationality of the new salaried management of large organisations replaced the hunches and intuition of the former owner-entrepreneurs. Earliest definitions of management emphasised precision, objectivity,

rationality and control, traits long associated with masculinity The exclusion of feelings and emotions, the unpredictable and the uncertain was vital to this new management rationale.

> (its specific nature) is developed the more perfectly bureaucacy is dehumanised, the more completely it succeeds in elimination for official business love, hatred and all purely personal irrational and emotional elements which escape calculation. This is the specific nature of bureaucracy and it is appraised as its special virtue (from Hans Gerth and C. Wright Mills (eds) *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology* 1958 p215)

Weber's ideal-type bureaucracy has been criticised by feminist writers as having an implicitly gendered subtext (Acker 1990; Pringle 1989a; Bologh 1990), in that the apparent neutrality of rules disguises gender interests. Pringle (1989) says it can be interpreted as a commentary on the construction of a particular kind of masculinity, based on the exclusion of the personal, the sexual and the feminine from any definition of 'rationality'.

Industry developed and organisations were structured according to F.W. Taylor's theory of scientific management[1] which also emphasised rationality, objectivity and impartiality. By designating management as a science, women, popularly considered as the antithesis of science by virtue of their closeness to nature (Merchant 1980), were further excluded. So the dominant model of professional management, from its inception, excluded the symbols of femininity and promoted characteristics of a type of exemplary masculinity (typically white middle class).

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[1] Taylor, F.W (1967)*The Principles of Scientific Management* New York: WW Norton (first published 1911)

Work is the main social arena in which men act out their needs for status, authority, power, influence and material rewards (Cockburn 1986). Willis argues that consequently, organisations are structured to protect male power and reward masculinity accordingly (Willis 1977). Preserving the masculinity of a job is important even when the status of the job has been downgraded (Collinson and Knights 1986). Some writers have discussed the need by men to define their identity by their difference to women (de Beauvoir 1953; Morgan 1986; Gherardi 1995).

In organisational terms this has meant constructing women as non-managers and, even more, as being unsuitable for management e.g. too emotional. Men's ability to hold on to management as a male domain is rooted in men's ability to construct the cluster of skills that make up management as being rooted in masculinity. I contend that this has got harder to do as women have developed the same skills and gained the same qualifications as men.

Sameness / Difference Debate

The sameness/difference debate in feminist theory is reflected in the field of management. Emphasising sameness, as the liberal rhetoric of equal opportunities legislation has done, made it difficult for women to compete with men on men's terms. But emphasising difference has its own pitfalls, as it enables the differences to be accentuated to women's disadvantage (Cockburn 1991).

Some empirical studies of women and men managers have shown that there are differences in their ways of managing[2] and other studies have shown that there are

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[2] Marshall 1984; Rosener 1990; Hegelson 1991; Cholmeley 1991; Fagenson 1993; Coyle 1993; Tanton 1994.

no differences. Still more studies have showed that both men and women thought that men possessed more of the characteristics that made a good manager (Schein 1973, 1976,1994; Powell 1988).

In the nineties women's difference in style has been highlighted by some who say it suits current business demands. In a changing economic environment, where service industries predominate in the West, communication skills have become far more important as a management attribute. Some writers say that changing organisational structures mean that feminine skills are particularly suitable for flexible, non-hierarchical team work, open management and high trust employment relationships (Hammond 1994; Rosener 1990; Schwartz 1992; Tanton 1994).

Although many feminist writers do emphasise that the different ways of managing may be because of socialisation (Coyle 1993; Rosener 1990), the danger of essentialism is still there. Women's difference can always be turned to their disadvantage and be deemed inferior. Pollitt argues that

> the biggest problem with all these accounts of gender difference is that they credit the differences they find to universal features of male and female development rather than to the economic and social positions men and women hold .....and questions of power, privilege and money. (Pollitt 1995 p.48)

That women' s difference can be turned to disadvantage was illustrated only too well in the now famous Sears Roebuck case in which women's 'difference' was deemed to justify excluding them from highly paid commission sales jobs (Milkman 1986).

It may appear that women's skills are now in demand for management in Western captitalism. It is also arguable that these feminine skills are currently in demand for management in much the same way as women's nimble fingers and patience made them 'suitable' for various types of monotonous factory work. Women may be entering management to fulfil certain functions and these are to be found in the lower ranks of management and in those areas most concerned with customer needs (Savage 1994). We see here that women's 'difference' is only valued to the extent that it contributes to profitability. I suggest that management characteristics change along with economic conditions. This does not mean that men cannot learn these 'feminine' skills as I show below.

There is little evidence that women's superior skills are required in the upper echelons of senior management. Still (1994) argues that 'style' becomes a deciding factor at the senior levels, and women fail because they do not know how to behave according to the male standard. Training for a profession can reduce the gender differences considerably - e.g. not getting emotionally involved with a client becomes part and parcel of the job and not merely a matter of choice for the individual (Johnson and Powell 1993). My earlier comments on the ways organisational culture may include women managers are applicable here. I looked in my research to see if there were signs that senior women had more leeway to manage according to their own style or less.

The sameness/difference debate may be useful in casting light on the practices of management and in revealing the ways in which management is gendered. But it leads us up a blind alley in terms of arguing about women's progress or lack of it. In a sense it is asking the wrong question. It also inadequately accounts for the continuing redefinition of management and the centrality of the demands of the

market place. Bacchi (1990) argues that the sameness/difference debate stops short and fails to criticise the system which encourages men to be a particular way - detached, competitive and abstracted from personal needs. The work on masculinity (see below) goes some way to responding to this criticism.

In the end it is not about difference, it is about what is valued. Instead of merely asking do men and women manage differently, it is perhaps more interesting to ask what it is that constitutes variations in management style with any difference between men and women being one such variation. As highlighted in the management literature, other possible influences on style may be leadership, seniority, gender composition of the division and the business function of the division. The influence of gender may be relevant and different gendered styles may cross cut these other influences. What is it that determines the characteristics of management?

Functional requirements of management position

Anna Wahl (1998) studied a woman-dominated company and found that style was relevant according to the functional position of the manager i.e. the business area they were engaged in. So, for instance, she found that the style of the marketing director was different from that of the finance director and Wahl put these differences in style down to the work the director was engaged in, and not whether they were men or women. Different businesses require different management skills. Women managers often dominate in service industries where communication skills are required (e.g. retailing and retail banking). Researchers of management style try to find appropriate settings where there are plenty of women managers e.g. banks and retailers and in doing so often make assumptions that it is the gender composition which affects the style of management. It could be argued that the

business itself sets demands on management style. The role of the business function has not been adequately researched in the women in management literature, and it is one that I try to attend to in my research .

Leadership

Strong leadership has been a pre-requisite to any success in organisational life, particularly when there is structural and cultural change (Hammond and Holton 1992; Handy 1985; Schein 1985; Peters and Waterman 1982; Anthony 1990; Brown 1995). Leadership then may be expected to have a big influence on management style and I include it in my list of variables. The example a leader sets in the way that he/she manages is crucial in how their more junior leaders manage. I asked respondents in the questionnaire whether they had a strong leader and I was fortunate to meet a few of the leaders in the course of the research so I could ascertain the impact they had for myself.

Problematising masculinity

Prompted by feminism, academics have undertaken analyses of men and masculinities and tried to decentre the male in discourse, problematising maleness and masculinities within the field of management studies (Roper 1994; Hearn 1992a, 1992b, 1993a, 1996, 1994; Collinson and Collinson 1990,1996; Collinson and Hearn 1994,1996; Kerfoot and Knights 1994,1996; Hollway 1996; Whitehead 1997). A focus on men and masculinities as problematic is a welcome change from a focus on women. Themes uncovered by feminist analysis, like the genderedness of bureaucracy and the gendered nature of management itself, are being looked at in more detail to reveal the different masculinities at play (Morgan 1996). Particular

fields of work are being scrutinised, accountancy (Lehman 1996), academic life (Prichard 1996; Duke 1997), entrepreneurialism (Martin 1996; Reed 1996). However discussions as to how men adopt different masculinities should not detract from the focus of the reality of male power in organisations (Collinson and Hearn 1994, 1996).

In many ways the concern with highlighting the ongoing process of the construction of masculinity is right. It must be seen as a continuous shifting process (Kondo 1990), because where there is movement there is the possibility of change. However, we must not forget that the oppression or, even as Gherardi puts it, 'second sexing' of women seems to be a recurring theme in all these masculinities. What is the meaning of masculinities -are they discourses related solely to men or can women invest in them? What happens when they do? Kerfoot and Knights point out that masculinity and management are not two separate concepts but that management discourse is imbued with certain notions of masculinity, and both male and female may engage with it (Kerfoot and Knights 1996).

Women are now taking part in management discourse and indeed can and do display the same characteristics as men, but they are often then stigmatised for being 'masculine'. When Ann Hopkins sued Price Waterhouse for sex discrimination for failing to make her a partner, the accountancy firm's defence was that she was unladylike, her behaviour was macho and that she should be more feminine in the way she walked, talked and behaved (Weisel 1991). So it is not masculinity per se that is valorised in organisations, it is masculinity in men .

Just as a discourse on masculinity may be available to certain women, the discourse of femininities are open to men. In McDowell's (1997) recent study of merchant

banking, she chooses to explore the culture through the conceptual tools of subjectivity, identities and masculinities and femininities and the notion of performance at work. She shows that gendered identities and interactions in the working environment are, within bounds, fluid and negotiable (p.208). But, by focusing on gender performance as a masquerade, she has to acknowledge that men too are able to adapt and construct differential performances.

Linstead (1995) points out that by adopting male characteristics, women are not seen as extending their femaleness but as abandoning it. In contrast, when men embrace a more 'feminine' way of behaving, it is considered an addition to male virtues.

> The image (of a caring man) allows the colonisation of certain attractive parts of femininity in order to re-centre rather than de- centre masculinity and further marginalize the feminine by creating a more complete version of masculinity. (Linstead 1995 p.200)

We have then a somewhat paradoxical situation where we may have 'femininity' valued in women and 'femininity' valued also in men. Which will be valued most? A focus on masculinities is interesting in providing a more sophisticated account of gender relations in organisations. What it cannot do, though, is explain why it is that women managers who display masculine traits are vilified whilst men who display feminine traits are not. So, although removing masculinity from men in this way enables the prospect of change for men, and in theory allows women the chance to also invest in masculinities, the link between masculinity and men and men's power over women needs to be held clearly in view. I draw on these ideas when discussing the material on the different styles of men and women.

Emotion

One of the recurring criticisms of women who aspired to be managers has been that they were too emotional. As shown above, management was deemed to be free of emotion and people needed to repress emotions, which were considered evidence of lack of control. Kerfoot and Knights (1993) demonstrate that paternalism and strategic management as forms, styles or techniques of managing people and organisations are both constitutive, of and embedded in, what they term a discourse of masculinity.

> Yet as 'positive' techniques for managing lives, both paternalistic and competitive masculinity have the effect of constituting subjects with minimal resources for expressing feelings and emotions, and offer little vocabulary to acknowledge or describe weakness and failure. (Kerfoot and Knights 1993 p.674)

This lack of available discourse for expressing emotions and feelings is a recurring theme reported by women managers who experience it as a kind of silencing (Marshall 1984; Coleman 1991). The denial of emotion also features in critiques of 'masculine' management (Fineman 1993; Giddens 1992) yet Roper's (1994) classic study of organisational men illustrates that men invest a lot of emotion, of a kind, in their work and their work relationships (Roper 1994). It needs to be emphasised that it is only certain emotions which are repressed in 'male' organisational life. The word emotional is usually used when referring to emotions like love, sadness or people expressing their vulnerability. But expression of anger is an emotion and so are anxiety, fear, greed and pride. There are manifestations of these in business life every day, but men who may express these emotions are not called 'emotional'. Women who get angry, however, will probably be called emotional. Most senior women I spoke to tried hard not to express any emotions at all to avoid what they saw as a

detrimental term 'emotional'. The increasing academic interest in the world of emotions has prompted Gherardi to ask whether it is now being colonised by managerial man.

> One may legitimately suspect that emotionality is now undergoing a process of defeminisation with the intention of ascribing it greater legitimacy. (Gherardi 1995 p.153)

It is an extension of the trend towards regarding people as assets. The Human Resource Management approach of acknowledging employees' values and beliefs and trying to harness them to the needs of the organisation is now being extended to emotions.[4]

In my research I asked about emotions and the expression of them, finding out what was appropriate where and by whom and which kind of emotions were legitimated by the organisation. I took Hearn's warning that we should be wary of naturalising the gendered forms of emotion in organisation,

> whilst it is clearly completely inaccurate to equate either organisations or men's action with instrumentality, and women's actions with emotionality, what is of interest is the association of these phenomena within discourses. (Hearn 1993b p.153)

I wanted to see which emotions were acceptable in different divisions and organisations and whether the expression of emotions was linked into a particular style of management.

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[4] E.g. In his management book *Emotional Capital* Kevin Thomson (1998 Oxford: Capstone) states "organisations in the future will manage feelings, beliefs, perceptions and values - the asset of emotional capital - as the hidden resources with the power to translate people's knowledge into positive action."

MY RESEARCH

My aim, then, in this research was to investigate management styles and try to locate gender within them. I had no fixed ideas as to whether women's styles were different or not but I felt it important to ask both women and men whether they thought they were and, if so, in what ways. This is a different approach to listing (masculine) management characteristics and asking whether men or women are more suitable to be managers. I also wanted to consider whether some styles were more suited to women than others and, indeed, did women have a different style to men and if so was it valued as much? Does a different management style act as a means of closure to women in certain areas? Could I see that a different management style may be responsible for women's more inferior status within the organisations? What were the other variables responsible for differing management styles- were there organisational differences, divisional differences and differences at different levels? Did the gender composition of a division influence the style, and how important was the leadership? How did any possible gender differences in style interact with these other variables? Was there evidence of masculinities at play in management styles and, if so, could women invest in the masculinity of management and, if so, what were the consequences? As stated above, what were the legitimate emotions in the workplace?

Operationalisation of concepts

I tried to gauge the management style through a number of factors - decision making, what work characteristics respondents think is most rewarded, strength/ personality of leadership, whether there is a hierarchical or non hierarchical structure, the importance or not of status and seniority, whether emotions are

acknowledged and which kinds of emotion. The open-ended question on differing gender styles provided a good source of data for particular characteristics of management. I briefly outline my methods for studying management style and lay out my research findings before a brief conclusion.

METHODS

I needed to get the best impression I could of the different management styles in the two organisations and see what factors influenced them and where gender was located in these influences. I used the questionnaire to provide much of the data, including questions on leadership and loyalty, in order to ascertain the importance of the leader in the division. I asked about decision making, communication, meetings, hierarchy, which work attributes were rewarded and the ways in which people were expected to work. My line of questioning was influenced by Handy's work (1985) and other culture surveys and I was specific when asking about the division or the whole organisation. These questions were to ascertain whether the prevailing style was, for instance, team-orientated, whether decision making was consensus-based or came from top down in a hierarchical fashion, whether the organisation encouraged individualism and risk taking. I asked about the expression of emotions. As well as these general questions on style, which did not directly have a gender bias to them, I included the question, "Do you think women manage differently from men?", and, following this, an open-ended question asking if yes, in what ways? In interviews respondents gave me quite a clear view on the way the business was managed and as the interviews tended to be quite work-related, I gained a lot of data for this section from them. Also, my shadowing gave me the opportunity to see some of this management in practice which was invaluable.

I drew out three variables from the data, which influenced management style, business function, leadership and gender composition. The results were difficult to lay out systematically because the variables were so interconnected. I shall discuss the airline's overall management style and its divisional styles in relation to the data on whether respondents thought that women managed differently from men. I then analyse the bank results in the same way, before discussing in what ways respondents thought that women managed differently from men. Findings on emotion in both organisations are then discussed before the conclusion to the chapter.

RESULTS

AIRCO MANAGEMENT STYLE

The traditional management style of the former State-owned airline had been bureaucratic, with its insistence on rules and regulations and its emphasis on status inherited from its RAF roots. Decisions were made by committees rather than individuals so that responsibility and accountability were poor. Despite an enormous change in culture and style over the past fifteen years, I found residues of the old bureaucratic and hierarchical structures with the accompanying problems of poor accountability and slow decision making. I also found that status awareness was still high and internal politics busy. Management style was based on consensus decisions, with people reluctant to stick their necks out for fear of making a bad decision.

I found a very high loyalty factor, with 75% of all respondents professing to owe allegiance and loyalty to their department and 86% of all respondents intending to continue their careers at Airco. Most of my interviewees genuinely enjoyed working for the airline - its high public profile as one of Britain's top companies was one

reason, the perceived glamour of the airline industry and its global reaches was another and the perk of free and reduced rate travel was also a major plus.

Although divisional styles varied, a recurring theme throughout the airline was the consensus culture, which whilst laudable in that it includes those affected by decisions, in a company of this size makes decision-making slow - 67% of all respondents said that decision making was too slow. It also makes it hard to know who has made the decision as all kinds of people participate in the process.

> I'm asked to look over a document, sign it and all of a sudden I'm taking the decision too (Male MG, Finance)

Eighty five per cent of respondents said that they went to meetings out of official work hours and some said that meetings took up at least one quarter of their day. There were far too many meetings, with too many people attending them. Meetings in a large complex organisation are one way of being visible. Mistrust of the administrative staff and fear of being missed means managers and senior managers attend all meetings in which they may have an interest, when someone more junior would do perfectly well. Another general trait in the airline style of management was a dislike of conflict, which may often lead to poor communication and people not saying what they meant. It has also lead to a 'managing up tendency'.

> Everyone makes decision upwards. They say what they think their boss wants to hear. If the figures look bad, they may disguise them. We don't like giving bad news to the boss so it often takes a long while before the top management realise all is not well. (Male MG. Cargo)

Because of this fear of upsetting the boss, or of making a bad decision, managers send decisions upwards - often up to the chief executive, rather than get it wrong.

Perhaps because of this dislike of open conflict with people, there is a lot of behind the scenes manoeuvring with the right people. Political networking is vital, with 41% of respondents saying that getting on with the boss is the most rewarded attribute an employee can have. This has repercussions on women who are shown to dislike politics.

> Merit is not sufficient nor sometimes primary in succeeding and women need to be able to infiltrate and be very political themselves. (Female MG, Human Resources)

Status is still important in the airline and people regarded other people's position of seniority as a pointer as to how to treat them. My data on gender differences, set out later in this chapter, shows that women are not as concerned with status as men.

Last decade's campaign of Putting People First has been interpreted by some as supporting a more female style of management, promoting as it did caring, communication and better service - skills traditionally associated with women. This can be seen as an example of difference being valued when it adds to profitability. The former chief executive saw women as an untapped resource and introduced the airlines equal opportunities campaign to promote more women managers.

The new campaign, called Leadership 2000, uses slogans like Favouring the Brave and Return of the Heroes. It is trying to instill leadership skills into management and make it more entrepreneurial. Whilst promoting responsibility in managers the campaign emphasises boldness, bravery, heroism and is perceived by many women in the airline as being rather macho. Famous 'heroes' both past and present were used in the publicity, showing posters of men like Simon Weston, the Falklands hero, which emphasised his bravery in confronting friends with a scarred face, rather than his

bravery in battle, Martin Luther King and John Kennedy. Some women said they felt totally alienated by all the talk of 'Favouring the Brave'. Fifty one per cent of all female respondents were positive about the new campaign compared to 67% of all male respondents.

In response to whether managers thought that women managed differently from men

- 74% of all respondents thought that women managed differently from men.
- 55% of all male respondents thought that women managed differently from men.
- 84% of all female respondents thought that women managed differently from men.

We can see here that a much bigger percentage of women thought they managed differently than men. I see the business demands as being crucial in demanding skills of a type, as well as leadership styles, and it is important to locate women's differences in the areas of business they work.

Table 4i Do women in Airco manage differently? Responses of male and female managers by division

	Yes% (no.)	No % (no.)
Cabin Services	50% (7)	50% (7)
Cargo	80% (8)	20% (2)
Marketing	57% (8)	43% (6)
Finance	77% (23)	23% (7)
Human Resources	87% (25)	13% (4)

sample size 97

DIVISIONAL MANAGEMENT STYLES

Marketing

Marketing, where 57% of respondents thought that women managed differently, is made up of a highly motivated, fast moving group of young people who are now a vital part of the airline's future success. It has the highest proportion of 'new' people i.e. non-airline, than any other division and this in itself gives the division a freshness. The downside for management is that company loyalty is lower - people are in Marketing rather than just being in the airline and there is an uncharacteristically high turnover of people. Marketing is an individualistic sort of area, where people are very committed and quite egocentric, looking out for themselves, and there is quite a lot of confrontation between strong characters, again out of line with the prevailing airline style.

> There is a lot of adrenalin as it is quite dynamic but as it is managed by the same type of people - it is not really ideal. It doesn't have a terrific history of man management skills. (Male MG)

> I consider the style of management to be quite macho here. It is a lot about pushing through your own ideas and you win through by sheer force of character. (Male MG)

There is a high proportion of women managers (47%). This may be in part due to the youth of the industry and its recent arrival in the airline - it has no long history for it to have become really entrenched as a masculine area. Marketing is also very results orientated, which some feel explains why it offers more scope for women to do well. An idea for a campaign is either accepted or not, there are no half way measures and in this respect whether a man or a woman thought it up is irrelevant. The advertising industry generally has been a popular area for women.

> Success is measurable.If they get results, they are judged purely on that. Something works or its doesn't work. Something generates revenue or it doesn't. Talent is the issue. (Female SM)

The most senior manager, under board level, in Marketing is a forty year old woman with two children, who arrived three years ago from an American food company. The hours are tough, indeed the highest of any division, at an average of 10.6 hours per day. She was a hard taskmaster who expected a lot out of her team but worked incredibly hard herself. She described herself as fair and people who worked for her respected her but also held her in awe, although as a department there was little hierarchy. She kept a personal distance from those who worked for her in the department.

Here, then, we have a division which on its gender composition could be considered quite feminised, with nearly as many women in senior management as men (47%). This might have led one to expect that any potential difference between men and women's style of management would be clear to see. Yet only 57% of the department surveyed thought that women managed differently from men, despite there being so many women managers. I attribute this to the function of the business which was about bringing a successful idea into fruition. It did not involve dealing with customers or providing a people service in any way. This did not detract from a high level of awareness around people issues and communication in the division. A lively, stimulating environment was considered a necessary ingredient for the creative drive of the division. Its leader, whilst a woman, did not manage in a characteristically 'feminine' way.

Cargo

Cargo, where 80% of respondents thought that women managed differently, was undergoing structural and cultural change. The comfortable life career in Cargo was no longer assured. Old working practices, like controlled overtime (as much as 35% of all work on the shop floor), high pay rates, as well as unproductive managers were under attack for being uneconomical. Margins in the once very profitable business had been eroded and change was underway to improve productivity. The new MD was an airline man, new to the cargo industry, and was determined to make his presence felt. I believe he had been appointed for his quite brash and aggressive approach and there was a certain amount of fear in the division as change was going to be painful. The management style was also driven to some extent by the strained relationship between management and the unions. There have been serious industrial disputes in the past and the threat of more accompanies every management change. The division of 'them' and 'us' was even apparent in Cargo's restaurant, heralded as open to all levels even the MD, yet overalled employees were requested to sit on one particular side of the room.

The management approach was adversarial and combative, based on beating union tactics, rather than on any collaborative decision making. Its emphasis was on deliverance of figures/propositions/plans rather than any deliberation on how this may best be done, or taking into account people's skills, feelings etc. When considering employees the only consideration would be, can this person deliver or not ?

My time there coincided with a particularly difficult period. The MD had been there about eighteen months and figures were not very good. He felt constrained by the resistance to change from all levels. He was very much the commander-in-chief and

there was a sense of a war being fought, albeit it was described as more like a long drawn out terrorist campaign. One meeting of the senior managers discussed a new plan, a secret plan, drawn up by a consultant who had come in to Cargo on a one year contract. He was unveiling his plan to increase productivity (which would have involved redundancies) and the whole meeting took on the cloak of a secretive gathering of officers planning a strategic attack during a war. The 'underground' operation involved putting together a task force to investigate productivity on the shop floor. The one senior woman manager (SM) works in the operational area and deals directly with the men on the shopfloor. It was she who pointed out the potential unsettling effect on shopfloor employees of having a secret task force snooping around and asking them questions. She asked for tact and courtesy. It was a timely reminder that the others were discussing the future livelihood of the shopfloor men, not some strange dehumanised enemy, and her interruption made for some discomfort around the table.

As women managers were so few and far between in this division, and hence there was little to judge women's managing skills on, I did wonder whether the men merely imagined women would manage differently, particularly given the macho approach of current management, or whether the few women around were different. Certainly one woman manager, aged about fifty, in the human resource division said she was always called in on sensitive issues The one senior woman manager thought she had a more straightforward approach than her male contemporaries and this may have influenced the responses.

In a way it's easier for me as a woman dealing with the shopfloor - I mean the men in management are from a different class yet they are supposed to relate to the men as men and find it difficult. I'm different anyway. It is an intimidating environment and fairly hostile, but I have been here a long time

(seventeen years) and am used to it and the men are used to me. I think they respect me. (Female SM)

This woman also did a lot of trade union negotiating and she found the adversarial style of negotiation frustrating.

I do however find it incredibly boring, playing these games. We know that each side holds back something and we have to develop these negotiating stances, pretending to offer this but really will give that, I mean there is total mistrust on both sides and I find it time wasting and irritating. Why can't we just all put our cards on the table upfront. But I think that both sides, management and unions, enjoy these tactics and the game. (Female SM)

She was accepted for herself and had her own style which she had developed over the years she had been there. I think it would have been much harder for a senior woman manager to move in to Cargo from another division and perhaps that is why it hadn't happened.

Cabin Services

In Cabin Services, where only 50% of respondents thought that women managed differently, all ten thousand cabin crew were passing through an intensive training programme, called Breakthrough. How cabin crew treat passengers has become the key to a successful airline business and the airline's recent investment in their staff training is a testament to this. Breakthrough is based on existential psychology, which sees the self as in charge of its own destiny. The emphasis on cabin crew service is now on 'being' as opposed to 'doing' and to do this effectively it was felt that staff needed to understand themselves, and relate to themselves, before they could relate to passengers. Managers, also, were being trained to be more in touch with themselves in order to relate to cabin crew more effectively. One recent senior managers' programme used the Actors' Workshop, which was designed to uncover

what roles people felt comfortable with and then to explore why. The logic behind the programme is that it is easier to understand someone's input if you know where they are coming from.

> It is a shift in leadership style that we are looking for; it's not doing, it's being and letting people free a bit more, freedom of choice, more spontaneity, being yourself, being genuine, being at ease with yourself, with colleagues and with customers.(Male SM)

It was an awareness of self that I found as a characteristic peculiar to Cabin Services, with its emphasis on people's ability to bring personal strengths and weaknesses into the work of management, something which goes totally against the traditional understanding of a uniform rational management. I think this acknowledgement and allowance of difference gives space for women to be themselves, free from the straitjacket of a set of laid down behaviours and characteristics. This resonates with the work of Parker and Hall who suggest that the flexible workplace can also extend beyond time/space or style to encompass 'psychological availability'.

> A flexible work place enables employees to bring their 'full' selves to work and to be psychologically engaged in the tasks, activities and relationships that make up their jobs. (Parker and Hall 1993 p.124)

They argue that people have personal identities and non-work roles and people are more engaged in their work when they can express, rather than suppress, these identities in the workplace. This type of style is demanded when it suits the business needs.

> I'm not sure it is what the whole airline wants, but I think it works here. It is a simple message - creating the climate of openness, trust, honesty, frankness and it's really bringing yourself at home to work. You don't have to put on this cloak of professionalism, hierarchy and office. (Male SM)

One of the problems women in management have encountered is this strict demarcation between home self and work self (McDowell 1997) and I believe that this psychic merging of the two made working life for women in Cabin Services more comfortable than in more task orientated areas of the airline. Indeed, one male SM said

> I think women probably bring themselves to work more easily than men do. What we are trying to do is get the men to do the same. They are still stuck on the being professional kick. (Male SM)

Whenever I asked why the style of management here was so personal, I was told it was because of the nature of the business. The change, involving asking cabin crew to be more themselves rather than act like a uniform model, had repercussions up the management line.

> It's the people, you become a reflection of the people you manage. Because there are 10,000 cabin staff and we recruit types of people who care about people; they entertain people, they're extroverts, they're quite sensitive; emotion forms quite a large part of their life, they are comfortable with emotion and showing emotion. They have to get to know people very well, working in extreme conditions with a group they may have never met before, dealing with difficult passengers. They have to be outgoing. It is all quite theatrical really, sort of air-kissing and dramas and hugging - it's a show and they are performers. Management has to adapt accordingly. I mean you can't be Robert Maxwell in that situation. The unions in cabin services expect you to be tough but not macho. (Male SM)

> My view is that we work in a very emotional environment- cabin crew are incredibly, incredibly emotional. They go on a flight sometimes for upwards of 14 hours, where they are dealing with everyone else's problems and they step off the aeroplane, come in here and ask us for an envelope and we haven't got it and their reaction will be far worse than if they were in an ordinary office. (Female MG)

It cannot be entirely ignored that many of the cabin crew are gay men and this may also contribute to a 'feminine' style of management as people's personal situations were openly acknowledged and sensitivity and tact were required over many issues. A lot of the management training was geared towards people getting in touch with their emotions and learning how to be comfortable with them.

The non-hierarchical, informal management style was influenced strongly by the head of department. Sixty per cent of Cabin Services respondents said they had a strong leader and 50% said that motivation came from the top in response to the question of the way the division runs. It was this leader who had decided that even senior management would have to go on soul-baring weekends, and he did so himself. Some of the older male members of the division found the open style of management quite difficult. Again, here is an example of the power of leadership. He set the tone of what was or was not acceptable behaviour in his division, and, more than that, he tried to ensure that people changed for what he saw as the good of the business.

Senior women managers made up 32% of senior management and fewer Cabin Services respondents than from any other division thought that women managed differently than men at 50%.

> I don't see any difference between male and female managers in cabin services.(Female MG)
>
> We don't think male - female. (Male MG)

On there being a feminine style of management a female MG commented

> I actually think that's a load of crap. I believe that people emulate the way that they are managed. But I have to admit that I come across men who feel they should be in control as managers more often that I have come across men who manage from themselves. (Female MG)

This comment correlates with the above comment by a senior male manager who said that he thought women 'brought themselves to work' more easily than men.

This division offers a fascinating insight into the complexities of management style and gender. Men were being encouraged to invest in what has traditionally been seen as a feminine style of management - being in touch with their own and other people's emotions. I see in this division the effect of men managing in a more 'feminine' way, narrowing the perceived gender differences in style. In some ways women might be thought to have an advantage - in the way that Adkins and Lury (1998) have described women's performativity as being naturalised - and therefore not appreciated. What grated on some women managers' nerves was that skills that many of them have possessed 'naturally' are now suddenly being recognised as valued and men were being taught them. I contend that this emphasis on being yourself at work (as well as the lack of focus on heterosexuality - see chapter on sexuality) created a better working environment for women, born out by the figures that a higher percentage of women said that the airline was providing a culture which nurtured women than in any other division.

<u>Finance</u>

The finance division, where 77% of respondents thought that women managed differently, was made up of many small departments spread throught the airline site and was hard to analyse. Twenty per cent of senior management were women. Women have always worked in finance, as a glance in any accounts department will show, but it is only relatively recently that they have broken through to become

accountants in large numbers. A recent recruitment drive in the division had brought a new crowd of young accountants, many of whom were young women, into senior management. This change reflected the changing role of finance from a rather reactive bank like division - yes you can have the money for that project - to a more dynamic and proactive one.

The top five men in finance had arrived from Ford five to six years previously bringing with them a very command and control type of management style. This was hierarchical and authoritarian and had cascaded down throughout the division. A firm line to control the finance division had been required then and the corresponding lack of welfare towards employees has been a consequence of this approach. Many of the younger people complained about the lack of people skills in the division and I witnessed this at first hand in meetings which I attended.

> Central finance isn't a nice place to work in. It isn't teamy. It doesn't value its staff and you'll be expected to work fifteen hours a day during the budget. It is a department where people like me (line finance manager) have never been trained in man management skills. You are promoted on your technical skills alone, yet you are in charge of many people, so it' s hit or miss. But out on the line you see senior management treating their teams well and you can have a laugh and a joke. (Female SM)

In response to the question on different ways of managing, a high 77% of finance respondents thought that men and women managed differently. One very personable line finance manager talked about the different ways that women manage.

> We are more team players than men. We can be very masculine if we want to. I can shout and bawl and swear if I want to, but I also can read people quite well - and then vary my approach accordingly. For instance, I may flatter X by saying, 'I'm having some difficulty with this plan and I wondered whether you could help me out with it.' We use many different approaches. (Female SM)

Some of this adapting seemed to involve taking into account particular male colleagues' needs e.g. the need to feel more superior, the need to feel protective etc. This led me to think about the amount of extra, albeit unconscious, emotional work women put in to maintain their space in the work place. Gherardi talks of the need to do ceremonial work because the gender order has been upset (Gherardi 1995).

Leadership's lack of people management skills permeated the entire division and people generally felt overworked and undervalued. I found it to be the unhappiest division that I studied. Neither of the two senior women made any impact on the style of the overall division, indeed the second one managed in a very 'masculine' way in that she could not abide any display of emotion in the office at all. This contributes to the argument that people-orientated skills are not those necessarily demanded of senior managers, for whom tough decision making was the most important aspect of the job.

Human Resources

In Human Resources 87% of respondents thought that women managed differently. The division holds a mixed workforce with 46% of senior management being women. This is a person orientated division and, as such, people skills such as communication and good listening were a pre-requisite for the job. The importance the airline places on personnel issues ensures that the status of the division remains high, so that feminisation in terms of numbers of women managers and the person-orientated style has not resulted in diminishing its status.

It might have been thought that the presence of many women would mean a narrowing of the perceived difference in management styles - as perhaps in the case of Marketing or Cabin Services, but this division disproved that hypothesis. I put

this high degree of perceived difference down to the awareness of the concept, their focus on people's behaviour and the contact that HR managers had with all managers in the airline. Despite the friendliness of the division, it was fairly introverted and the people cautious.

> People manage their behaviour very well in HR. I suspect it's partly because they know or they see it happening elsewhere and they are party to the conversations about behaviour. There is a lot of caution about the way you behave, everything is very measured. There is not much spontaneity here and it is very political. (Female SM)

It was a comfortable place to work for women and there were a lot of middle aged women. Their presence added to the family feel of the division, yet, as I have reported, the intense political manoevring that occurred in this division put women at a disadvantage in as much as they reported less interest in political networking than men. People in this division were very careful at managing their behaviour, and emotional outbursts were rare.

SERCO MANAGEMENT STYLE

The family aspect of the firm has provide a legacy of a paternalistic style of management, some remnants of which still exist. Working for a merchant bank still holds a certain amount of prestige, despite the demise of Barings and takeovers of others, and most of the respondents were proud of the name they worked for. The City has never been renowned for its people skills and I found little awareness of management style in the bank. Strong characters, both past and present, may have discovered ways of working which were successful and these were adhered to by all, subsequent leaders included. A lack of overt career structure means that relating well to more senior directors becomes very important as careers progress. In both

corporate finance and investment management, people worked in teams, designed to give clients the best coverage of companies.

Tradition and the long history of the business meant that work practices were fairly established. There were codes of behaviour, all very gentlemanly. The overall style of management is results orientated and the main task is to increase profits. Because all managers are working with money and trying to increase it, either in commission or performance of funds or through deals, they are more influenced by the profit motive than the airline employees, whose priority was to provide a good service to clients. This priority given to free market philosophy dominates everything else and human issues are only a problem if they interfere in some way with it. This value of the fee-earning aspect of the business is reflected in the poor opinion shown towards the personnel department.

Sixty four per cent of all respondents said that working in a team was the work attribute which was most rewarded compared to only 14% who said that individual performance was what was rewarded. Yet when asked how the department was run, 55% said there was the expectation that each person worked to their best potential. This strand of individualism and team working ran through most of my findings at the merchant bank and appeared to work well. Individual ambition was accommodated, but not to the detriment of team work. It was hierarchical in structure and communication was formal. Overall the management style was low key, non-confrontational and quite introverted.

The bank is perceived by people inside and outside the bank as being a pleasant place to work, in contrast to the harsher environments of other City banks. The staff turnover is still low compared to the other merchant banks, 88% of all respondents

reported loyalty and allegiance to their department, and 77% thought they would be promoted within the organisation. Whilst the emphasis remained on a low key, introverted, team working style of management, there were variations in each division.

In response to whether managers thought that women managed differently from men

- 62% of all respondents thought that men and women managed differently
- 88% of all female respondents thought that men and women managed differently.
- 23% of all male respondents thought that men and women managed differently

There were no significant divisional differences in the survey figures but I will discuss my own observations in the divisional results below. The significant figures here are the very small percentage of men who thought there was a difference in the way women managed, compared to the percentage of women who did. The shortage of senior women managers may be one reason why men have not considered the question but the largest division, supplying the most respondents in it, was headed by a woman. In the airline divisions, which had few senior women managers e.g. Cargo and Finance, the majority of male respondents thought women did manage differently. Although surprising, the figures above correspond with the resounding lack of interest and understanding of the whole topic of working women that the men in the bank showed.

DIVISIONAL MANAGEMENT STYLES

European Corporate Finance Division (ECFD)

The corporate financiers exude an air of confidence, knowing that they occupy a much sought after position in the bank. They are sometimes accused of arrogance, and of being pleased with themselves. There is a cachet about working in corporate finance, even though much of the work in the early years is dull proof reading and number crunching, because of its connections with all the captains of industry and the enormous amount of money that can be earned both for the bank and for the employees themselves. Many are qualified lawyers and accountants. They need to have the social skills to be able to relate to extremely senior directors in the business community. Individuals are picked out to work in teams on certain deals and this is where the competetive element lies. Competence and hard work are important but a good relationship with the senior directors who pick their teams is vital.

> We are definitely not a star culture. For instance, I completed a very big deal today but it will be a Serco's deal, not mine personally. I will not talk to the press about it and it won't have my name stamped on it. We are very team-managed and team orientated. We have team leaders who are directors. (Male Director)

Only 11.6% of managers and directors in corporate finance were women. Women working in corporate finance can find themselves very isolated.

> It's a very tough environment and not many women want to put up with it. You need to be intellectually vigorous, and establish good relationships with senior executives in industry (mostly men), which is hard if you are young and female. (Female Director)

Serco has a reputation for having a lot of women in corporate finance, but before I arrived three women directors had left, two of whom I met, leaving the bank with

only one. Although people skills are important in making relationships with clients, this is more likely to involve not saying what you feel rather than saying what you feel. The senior people pushed the younger managers to their limits in terms of testing for loyalty and commitment, making them work extremely long hours. Emotions are kept firmly at bay - it is a very stiff upper lip atmosphere and there were complaints from respondents about poor communication. All the women there accepted the style of management and adapted accordingly.

Investment management (SIM)

Fund managers are increasingly under pressure to show short-term good performance, particularly in unit trusts. The division has been very successful in recent years and this showed through in the confidence of those who work there. They also work in teams and there is certainly far less room for individualism than in corporate finance. The division has a reputation for employing introspective, quiet, very serious, intelligent, nice people who cut a low profile.

SIM has the highest percentage of women, as well as the greatest number of any division, with women making up 21% of management level. Results orientated work, which is not dependent on individual relationships, with predictable hours, makes it the most popular area for women in the City.

The managing director of SIM is a forty year old woman, 'P', who had the respect and admiration of everyone I spoke to - even the self-confessed male chauvinists. She was considered a fair boss who listened to her staff but wasn't afraid of making difficult decisions. She was concerned about her staff's welfare as it pertained to their work but the focus was on winning new funds and improving funds' performance.

People were polite, friendly but could talk only of work and, even then, only of their own division.

Securities(SSEC)

A succession of management changes, with new leaders being brought in to change it around and then leaving after a short time, had left morale poor. Banking mentality and stockbroking mentality couldn't be further apart and the lack of understanding of the stockbroking mentality by owner banks has caused endless problems. Stockbrokers tend to be individualists who know their own worth and dislike being managed.

The appointment of HG, who had successfully built up another large broking house ten years earlier and has a formidable reputation, as chief executive of global securities with a seat on the main board had given the division an injection of hope as well as introducing some nervousness. Change means jobs go. Indeed, there had been quite a bit of hiring and firing and he was making them work incredibly hard in an effort to improve profitability and performance. One woman who had recently returned after maternity break said

> Is this Serco? The whole place has changed, morale is zero and there is a huge amount of fear around. There is enormous pressure to perform. Six people were sacked last week. (Female Manager)

Eighty seven per cent of all SSEC respondents said that they had a strong leader, compared to only 50% from SIM. Although he was admired, there was a feeling that he gave insufficient praise, and so the motivation to work hard was fear not the desire to do well.

Women only made up 9% of management. Most of the senior women were found in the analysts' department - analysts write the research on companies which the sales people then sell to clients. The sales desk is quite a difficult environment and people say what they think and more. In a way you put yourself on the line there and you have to give as good as you get. There are few taboos. You need tremendous confidence and a thick skin.

> It is a much riskier and tougher environment in a way - you have to project yourself all the time in a fairly hostile environment, sell, sell, sell, which perhaps is harder for women to do. (Male Director)

WOMEN 'S DIFFERENCE TO MEN- BOTH CASE STUDIES

My findings show that a big majority of women in both case studies thought that women managed differently from men. The open-ended question of "If yes, in what ways ?" was answered by many and three clear themes emerged from both case studies. Women felt they were better managers than men.

1 Better people skills

Many respondents felt that women were better listeners, that they were more relationship-orientated, more empathetic, and more likely to take other people's feelings into account, and that they gave higher priority to human aspects of any situation. Respondents said that women were more understanding of family situations and managed 'with greater compassion and patience'.

2 Fewer status concerns

Respondents felt that women managers were more consensus-orientated, more concerned with how decisions had an impact on others, less political and more

collaborative with fewer status needs. This corresponded with my qualitative data which showed that women were less inclined to spend time on political networking that men were.

3 Better managerial skills

Respondents said that women managers were stronger characters, tougher, more flexible, that they were able to juggle different jobs at once, They were more demanding, more creative, found less obvious solutions and had better organisational skills. They were more able than men to adapt their style according to their work teams.

What are the implications of women perceiving their ways of managing as different? In some ways my findings do not support the argument that women's different style prevents their progress. It is hard to see how difference can be penalised if it is not acknowledged as different by men, although there is the possibility that men may be saying one thing but doing another. In the bank, where there were fewest women at top and bottom, a vast majority of men were saying they did not notice any difference, yet in the more 'male-dominated areas' of the airline a big majority said that there was a difference.

Women's stated dislike of status and politics and the perception that they are not as political as men could act to hold them down in these organisations where both of these were considered important for career progress. The reluctance of women to play politics is also discussed in the chapter on informal socialising. My findings support the more recent trend of problematising the masculinities of management (Collinson and Hearn 1996). There was a general feeling among women that the skills listed above were not recognised in organisations, particularly in the bank,

which the statistics would back up given that only 23% of men even recognised that women may manage differently. The women felt themselves to be better managers than men, but undervalued in the organisations.

In the airline some women suggested to me that some of the 'emotional' labour they did should be recognised officially in the KPI's (key performance indicators), instead of being unrecognised and unvalued. The suspiscion is that women are expected to bring certain caring characteristics to their work and these skills are naturalised, in the same way that mothering is considered a natural skill and the hard emotional and physical work goes unacknowledged. Instead it was factors like visibility, concern with status and single-mindedness, all criticised by many of the women as having nothing to do with productivity or good management per se, which continued to be rewarded.

Women saw themselves as different but better managers. This doesn't support those studies which say women point to masculine characteristics as being most suitable for managers. It does support those studies which aimed to show women's different ways of managing (Marshall 1984; Rosener 1990; Helgeson 1991; Coyle 1993).

The airline in some ways offers an example of valuing difference when it may add to profitability, most particularly when we see Cabin Services adopting a very 'feminine' style, for both men and women. Although it may be that women are more natural at 'bringing themselves to work', it is still men who dominate the senior level even there. Perhaps this is an example of valuing femininity in men as McDowell (1997) has suggested may happen.

Some women observed a narrowing of the difference between men and women as women reached more senior positions.

> Junior women managers are more aware of and giving of recognition to their teams, they are less emotional and dictatorial and more open to discussion of different options. But of more senior managers I see no differences between men and women. And those attributes which I consider positive, are seen by me in neither men or women. (Female MG, Marketing)

> What you find is that the women at senior levels tend to demonstrate fairly macho images and they are more acceptable. (Female MG, Human Resources)

There were also some negative comments from men about women managers - they were too aggressive, they try too hard to be like men, thus providing evidence for the contention that women who display masculine traits are considered unwomanly.

My interview and observational data show that style was fairly uniform throughout senior ranks of management both in the bank and the airline, apart from Cabin Services. This style was characterised by an emphasis on task, the business element of the job, the increased importance of networking and politics and the requirement of a self-confident and decisive manner. So, seniority becomes a factor in whether men and women manage differently or not. This lends weight to my argument that, so far, the 'feminine' side of management skills has not been required at senior levels (apart from when the business requires it, according to the leadership, as in Cabin Services).

EMOTION IN BOTH ORGANISATIONS

I have declined to discuss emotion in the debate on sameness/difference in relation to management style so as to avoid an essentialist gendering of different emotions (Hearn 1993b). Interestingly no respondent in the open ended section referred to women being more emotional than men. As Swan (1994) has argued, emotion needs to be located in historically and culturally specific discourses. What it means differs as to who is doing the defining and when. Its rootedness in the body, its concept of essential autonomous existence, awaiting expression, has been questioned. The appropriateness of how, why, when and where we express emotion changes in time, place and culture. My findings show how certain emotions are legitimate in some areas and not in others (Halford, Savage and Witz 1997). I found that upset or distress at work were likely to be called displays of weakness and thus to be avoided at all costs, particularly by women. But other emotions are expressed.

Banks were the original non-industrial bureaucracies and, as such, were supposed to represent the triumph of rationality over emotion. Yet the emotion of greed is almost a pre-requisite for working in the City. Inflated salaries combined with huge job insecurity have resulted in both fear and greed becoming motivating factors in the lives of most City workers. There is a lot of emotion flying around where huge amounts of money are at stake. Anxiety about losing it, anger if someone jeopardises a lucrative deal, envy at the trader who is bringing in more business, fear of being found out when money is lost - these emotions make for a heady atmosphere in a trading room of the City. Tempers are lost and recovered in minutes, and elation is expressed in the champagne bars. But it is only in the areas of work where money is made or lost in seconds that emotions expressed through shouting, swearing, even tears are known. In the loftier planes of corporate finance and the more measured

investment management division, there is thought to be little need to express emotion, yet the quiet engines of greed, fear and pride also drive their work.

In the airline, the safety of thousands of air passengers every day provokes many emotions among employees. Mistakes in key areas could mean potential disaster. The nearer the employees are to the actual air transportation, the more heightened the emotion. Unlike the merchant bank, the presence of emotion was acknowledged in some areas of the airline and attempts were made to manage it rather than repress it. In Finance

> People do get angry and have stand up rows sometimes. But I would never ever burst into tears, that's a no -no. Similarly if you are suffering from stress through work, you just wouldn't say. Nor would you really discuss your private life. It's as though you haven't got one. (Female MG Finance)

In Cargo, where everyone was a 'soldier', there was little place for emotion. The boss's secretary was the one to go to if you had a problem. A problem of stress in the division, which had led one man to a breakdown and was obviously effecting others was ignored by the top management. Even the extremely sympathetic male Cargo human resources boss found he could not bring the subject up with senior managers because 'they would look on it as people copping out, being weak'. In the end, they brought in a doctor to make a diagnosis, which appeared more professional, and then asked the women in the department to present the findings as 'women package these things up better'.

When asked about the expression of emotion, one young man in Cargo said

> It's not encouraged! It's actively discouraged; I mean, it's a boy's culture isn't it, Cargo. It's hulking boxes isn't it? It's a man's world. Someone once cried

> but they had to leave the building to do it, so that gives you an idea of how acceptable that is. (Male MG, Cargo)

In Marketing, there was room for some expression of emotion, excitement, anger as people here are considered creative and quite egotistical and tempers did fly.

I have already discussed the displays of emotion in the Cabin Services division where management was endeavouring to harness it to its own ends. This provides a good example of management colonising both the hearts and minds of employees so as to better direct their efforts, concurring with Gherardi's claim that a greater legitimacy was being ascribed to emotions (Gherardi 1995). However, I felt that it would still be hard for a manager in Cabin Services to admit to not coping with work as everyone was so dedicated and prepared to work such long hours.

Human Resources acknowledged a place for emotion and dealt with it all the time in the course of their work with employees throughout the airline, yet they were quite constrained in expression of their own emotions.

> It's OK to express certain feelings if you express them in a way that is acceptable. You can express anger, in the right way, you can express disappointment, you can express positive pleasure, but if you show weakness, that is regarded as a problem. That would be like crying, or showing distress, or saying 'Oh God this is all too much for me'. (Female SM Human Resources)

To conclude, emotions which showed difficulty in coping, like symptoms of stress, were avoided in all areas of both organisations. Women still saw crying as a sign of weakness and as providing an immediate target for men to attack.

CONCLUSION

What has emerged is a cross-weaving of many different variables. My own interpretation of the data is that the business function does more to influence style than anything else. Leadership is second and gender composition is third.

In Airco Human Resources and Cabin Services, part of management's job was to find out what employees really thought and felt, not just that they were functioning and getting the job done. Where the goals of the division are more task or results-orientated, the management style reflected less personal involvement in employees' welfare. This is regardless of whether the leader is a man or woman or of the gender composition of the workforce. Many studies of female managers have looked at industries which employ a lot of women, like retailing and retail banking. It may be that the 'feminine' style often found is a requirement of the business, not a consequence of the gender composition.

Leadership has long been considered an important influence on organisational culture (Schein 1985; Anthony 1990; Ogbonna 1993). I found it to be a determining factor of management style and it is far more important if a culture is being changed, as in the cases of SSEC, Cargo and Cabin Services. Indeed, the culture change in the eighties at Airco was due to the chief executive adopting every aspect of the style he was trying to promote

> How we manage is a reflection of how we ourselves are managed.(Female MG Airco)

My findings do not support the argument that the numbers of women in a division or organisation makes it more likely that a feminine style is favoured. Marketing had the highest percentage of women at both senior and middle management levels and was run by a woman in an appropriate way for that business. Her approach was considered gender neutral by my respondents. Cabin Services was more 'femininely' run, with fewer senior women at the top. So a high percentage of women managers does not necessarily lead to a more 'feminine' management style.

Although in the questionnaire women considered themselves to manage differently from male managers, I found evidence of men managing in a 'feminine' way and women managing in a 'masculine' way. Women's 'skills', whether inherent, learned or more realistically continually worked at, are considered useful in certain areas, particularly for improving communication and customer service. These skills were valued more in the airline than the bank, but only in certain sections of the airline. They were not required at senior levels in the airline or in Cargo or Finance. I noted that these skills can be learned also by men and performed by them very satisfactorily, as in Cabin Services. The goal of all capitalist enterprises is to improve productivity and increase profits. All other aspects of organisational life flow from this number one priority. If it suits the business to employ women, it employs them. In this sense capitalism and patriarchy are often in tension (Walby 1990). Men's exclusion strategies sought to keep women out of various men's jobs, often to capital's loss. The economic project is about the appropriation of labour and extracting value from it and, in certain cases, this may equal exploitation. It may be hard to value women's skills at work when their work at home is devalued and, indeed, their status in society is devalued. Many equal pay cases have sought to increase the value of women's skills so that they can receive equal pay with men in

other jobs. (e.g. the long drawn out battle of the Enderby[4] case where a female physiotherapist sought to show that her skills were equal to those of a male pharmacist). The low pay of nurses is not because of their lack of skills but because of the devaluation of their skills.

I want to extend this concept to women managers because their 'natural' attributes of emotional labour are often exploited too. The point is illustrated by one woman manager herself, who thought that women's emotional work should have been recognised as a key performance indicator but was not. In some sense what is important is not whether women are really masquerading or being themselves but that certain characteristics are expected of all women and are expected to be performed for free, whilst other more 'masculine' characteristics are penalised in women. In management, if women are 'masculine' in their style they may be penalised socially for not being proper women, for not being feminine enough. Consequently, many of the senior women in both organisations were considered extremely 'tough' and unusual by men and women. The comments from some men about the aggressive nature of women managers is testament to the fact that masculinity in women is not valued.

This essentialising and naturalising of women's qualities is an important angle to grasp for women in management and goes a long way to explain why women feel their efforts go unrecognised. Instead of being described as women's characteristics, the effort involved in emotional labour needs to be revealed. What we are now seeing, in certain areas, is emotional work done by men being recognised whilst, when done by women, it is accepted as natural.

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[4]Enderby v Frenchay Health Authority and Secretary of State for Health (1993) Industrial Relations Law Report 591

Women were less interested than men in concerns of status, visibility and internal politics, which they saw as irrelevant to doing a good job. The continual rewarding of these characteristics and the failure to adequately recognise women's skills by naturalising them may be seen to act as exclusionary to women managers, particularly at a senior level. In the airline there was more of an emphasis on politics, status and visibility than in the bank. In Airco it was hard to show your contribution as a manager, and, where productivity is difficult to measure, visibility becomes important. In the bank it was easier - you sold more shares than other people, did more transactions or your fund performance was better, thus the emphasis was less on status and rank and more on performance. In that sense the management style of the bank was more in women's favour.

The switch of campaign in Airco, from 'Putting People First' to the more macho 'Favouring the Brave', may also have repercussions on the gendered effects of management style. The comments on emotion are relevant here. Stereotypes of successful businessmen often liken them to generals leading armies to battle. If the prevailing image of a successful leader is construed to a hero, as in the new campaign, then women will have more difficulty than men modelling themselves on it.

I want to conclude on a cautionary note that, while at this point in time women may be in some demand for certain management jobs, there is no certainty that requirements and skills may change in a different economic climate. There is evidence that men may also learn 'feminine' skills, especially younger men. There are also a range of exclusionary tactics which may co-exist with a demand for women's skills, thus I argue that a wider approach to women in management needs to be taken than merely looking at management style.

CHAPTER FIVE

TIME MANAGEMENT

INTRODUCTION

This chapter looks at long hours at work. The concept of a long hours culture is now widely accepted and as such I include it as one of constituents of organisational culture. At first glance time management and the long hours culture seem to be gender neutral - there are no innate talents and skills in men that cannot be matched by women- stamina and energy are equally shared out. But it has an indirect effect on women in the workplace, in as much as women still take primary responsibility for childcare and household management and thus the burden of working long hours adds to the pressure they already have managing both family and career. I explore the reasons given for working long hours in a recent survey (Institute of Management Survey 1996) and see how they compare with my own data. I discuss time as a patriarchal resource as theorised by Buswell and Jenkins and the long hours ethic as a characteristic of masculinity (Massey 1997), together with some of Hochschild's findings (1997) before setting out and analysing my own data.

BACKGROUND

A large part of the tension between home and work is caused by the long hours culture that exists in organisations. British workers now put in the longest hours in the European Union - 28% of men work more than 48 hours per week, and we are the only country in Europe whose working day has increased in the last decade. 58% of organisations recently surveyed by the Institute of Management had been restructured in the previous two years. In 70% of them this resulted in fewer managers, though no less work. One in eight managers in Britain work more than

sixty hours per week with 40% working more than fifty. Management hours have increased significantly over the past two years (Institute of Management Survey 1996), with 40% of the survey claiming to be working ten hours more a week than two years ago and 20% claiming to work fifteen more hours per week than they used to.

Long hours may be thought of as a material aspect to a job, yet very rarely is a long working day a formal requirment of a job. Certainly in the businesses I studied, there was nothing written in the employment contracts for managers about hours. Most people's formal working day was 9am -5pm or 9.30am - 5.30pm There is no overtime for managers, conversely there is the unspoken expectation that they will work as hard and for as long as is required to do their job adequately. This leads to a kind of self-imposed overtime. Workload pressure, company expectations, peer group pressure and ambition have resulted in what is now a widely accepted concept - the long hours culture.

Reasons for working long hours

The reason given in the Institute of Management Survey (1996) for the long hours worked by respondents was that there is now more competition for professional jobs as an increasing number of young people gain qualifications and that, combined with less stability in work, leads to people feeling vulnerable and insecure. Giving that bit more than anyone else in the department, who may have the same qualifications and experience, may result in working longer hours than anyone else. Time here can be seen as a resource to be drawn on in order to progress in an organisation. Massey found an element of individual competitiveness in explaining the long hours worked by scientists in her study on high technology workers (1997).

> Within workplaces, too, the interaction between employees can produce a culture which glorifies long hours of work. This may derive from competition between individuals but it may also result from various peer- group pressures - the need 'not to let the team down', for instance can become a form of social compulsion. (Massey 1997 p.110)

Organisations may exploit this competitiveness and, indeed, harness it to extract maximum work output from employees.

> Moreover if there is indeed a form of masculinity bound up with all this , then the companies in these parts of the economy let it have its head: they trade on it and benefit from it and they thereby reinforce it. (Massey 1997 p.116)

Time as a patriarchal resource

Obviously, working long hours is harder if you are the primary carer for your family or have other caring commitments. Even managing a household without children is hard if you are in your office for ten or eleven hours a day. We have already seen that the concept of a worker is one whose bodily and emotional needs are cared for by someone else (Acker 1990). On the whole men do not do that for women. Starkey (1989) has argued that how time is constructed, manipulated and experienced is crucial to our understanding of organisations.

Buswell and Jenkins (1994) see the use of 'time' as being one patriarchal strategy to segregate and disadvantage women within the labour market and labour process. Organisations construct jobs around the availability of women's time i.e. when they are freed from domestic labour and this has become an invaluable source of cheap labour. (Between 1971 and 1993, 93% of the increase in women's employment was

in part time work, where women make up 85% of the work force)[1]. Using research in organisations where an equal opportunities discourse operates, Buswell and Jenkins show how these policies allow men to deny that inequality exists whilst simultaneously redefining the 'good worker' as the one who gives most time to the organisation (Buswell and Jenkins 1994). They see 'time' as a resource which is more available to men, who use it to segregate and disadvantage women within the labour market and labour process. They see segregation as the main strategy of public patriarchy (Walby 1990) with the labour market being constructed using the of part-time/full-time division as a real operating division. The authors see control through time as being a widespread patriarchal strategy. They draw on Paul Baggulely's (1991) theoretical work on the distinction between monological and dialogical forms of the organisation of labour, in which dialogical control includes informal collusion, conscious or unconscious, between men and the beliefs that they transmit to each other and act upon. Buswell and Jenkins see the way in which time is used in an organisational context as being best understood in terms of dialogical control.

Aside from the issue of part-time work which may be the more obvious strategy for segregating women, Buswell and Jenkins also point to the processes to do with time and place e.g. training programmes for management taking place away from work and often at weekends and the expectation that managers will work very long hours, and generally give priority to their work. They call this the identifier of middle class masculinity - instead of giving strength they give time. It may be that the giving of time is a signifier of masculinity but a straight swop from strength to giving time is too simplistic. Twenty years ago the vast majority of managers were middle class men who only worked a routine nine to five day (Roper 1994). Men then had few

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[1]Social Trends 1996

women managers to compare themselves with or from whom to differentiate themselves at work. Roper (1994) has examined the types of masculinity that this group of men displayed, and it was neither physical strength nor the ability to give time but very often it derived from the work itself. The ability to give time has become perhaps the most fundamental difference between men and women managers. Many women complain that there is far too much emphasis on hours spent in the office rather than what is done while they are there. Women's greater productivity and efficiency are often obscured because of a prevalent discourse of time as a commodity to be managed and given to paid work and that the giving of time symbolizes productivity, commitment and personal value (Lewis and Taylor 1996 p.121).

Massey, too, has described the working of long hours by high technology scientists as being bound up with a specific form of masculinity. Her case study respondents were not only forced to work long hours by the specific demands of their kind of work, but they actually wanted to because they loved their work (Massey 1997 p.110). Hence the particular form of masculinity to which she refers is bound up with the attachment to their jobs, which require abstract and rational thought, traits that are associated with masculinity. She suggests that the long hours reinforce the separation between 'other possible sides of life' from the abstract conceptual 'pure' mode of being, emphasising the dualism of home and work. This runs parallel to Dorothy Smith's (1987) line of thinking. It is not clear from Massey's paper whether the long hours alone warrant the application of the trait 'masculinity'.

I think that conceptualising time as a resource is useful, particularly as time is made available to men by women's labour. Men can only spend more time at work if they do less domestic work at home, and as their pay increases so does their exemption

from domestic sphere. A recent survey[2] showed that as job level and income bracket go up so do the hours, thereby making that step to the top harder for women with families. Hochschild's study of an American company, *The Time Bind*, shows clearly how time is used in a competitive way among aspiring managers.

> Time has a way of sorting people out in this company. A lot of people that don't make it to the top work long hours. But all the people I know who do make it work long hours. By the time people get to within three or four levels of the Management Committee, they're all very good, or else they wouldn't be there. So from that point on what counts is work and commitment (Senior executive quoted in Hochschild 1997 p.56)

The more senior managers may put in more hours but they also need help to organise their lives and a wife at home is invaluable.

> I really had it made. I worked very long hours and Emily just managed things, I never had to worry about getting the laundry etc. (Male executive quoted in Hochschild 1997 p.60)

There may be potential differences among men and women in their approaches to work and, in particular, senior well paid employment in management which my survey covers. It has been argued that women do indeed lack the intensity of commitment that men have when it comes to careers (Coward 1993) although recent work done by DEMOS shows that the younger generation of both men and women want a balance between work and family life.[3] Recently companies are recognising that there are other perks to life besides the company BMW and some are now offering more holiday or help with childcare instead of cars and insurance.[4]

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[2]Long Hours by Parents at Work (Sarah Burns) 1995
[3]Tomorrow's Women by Helen Wilkinson and Melanie Howard: DEMOS 1997.
[4]Littlewoods' recent introduction of such measures, reported in Equal Opportunities Review no76 November / December 1997.

There is much thought given to the management of work time yet little written about how women, and to some extent men, manage their time at home. Oakley's (1974) classic study on housework showed that women with children spent a minimum of forty hours a week doing housework and other surveys have shown that, even when women worked, they did most of the housework as well (Martin and Roberts 1984; Montgomery 1993). Hochschild's latest study argues quite controversially, that despite the tension and home/work conflict, women themselves are not fighting for shorter hours. Her findings demonstrate that women actually prefer to be at work, where they may be valued more, than at home where the emotional and physical demands on them may be too many. Having found a source of value and self-identity, women are not keen to give any of it up to spend more time at home. Much of the stress that they experience seems to come from poor relationships with their partners and continuing battles as to the sharing of work at home. I analyse my findings to see whether similar patterns emerge in women's feelings around home and work (Hochschild 1997).

I wanted to explore Buswell and Jenkins' theory that time as a resource is used by men as a patriarchal exclusion strategy. I have argued earlier for a conceptualisation of culture as a means of patriarchal closure and I include working long hours as being part of an organisation's culture, rather than conceptualising the control of time as dialogical strategy like Buswell and Jenkins. It is one constituent of culture which may or may not act as an exclusionary strategy. When and where did this apply? Who works the long hours and why? I wanted to see if the giving of time is taken by the organisation as a measure of commitment and/or suitability for seniority. Was time used in a competitive sense by managers? Were there any challenges to the long hours cultures where they existed and how important was the

leadership in promoting a long hours culture? Can the long hours culture be conceptualised as closure to women managers?

METHODS

I asked many questions about time, e.g. the number of hours worked, taking work home, meetings after work, whether work infringed on home life, in the questionnaire and I always asked my interviewees to go through their typical working day. It was important to ascertain how necessary working long hours was to the job, whether it was 'face' time or workload pressure and what the expectations in the divisions were. It was an area which people were very happy to talk about, particularly if they felt their hours were too long.

RESULTS AIRCO

My first impression of the airline, besides the friendliness of the employees, was how hard they worked. My questionnaire data backed this up. The overall average number of hours worked per day was 9.9 with a one hour differential between MG's and SM's. MG's worked an average 9.4 hours, whilst SM's worked an average 10.4 hours. It was frequently described to me as a place which was hard to leave at the end of the day. The histogram on the next page shows the frequency distribution of average hours worked. On top of these hours, 88% of all respondents took work home and 40% of these took work home two or three times per week. 79% said that the amount of hours worked infringed on their home/personal life. Most of my interviewees saw the average day for an airline manager as 8am-6pm, although early morning meetings have become increasingly popular.

Histogram 5 i Frequency distribution of hours worked by Airco managers

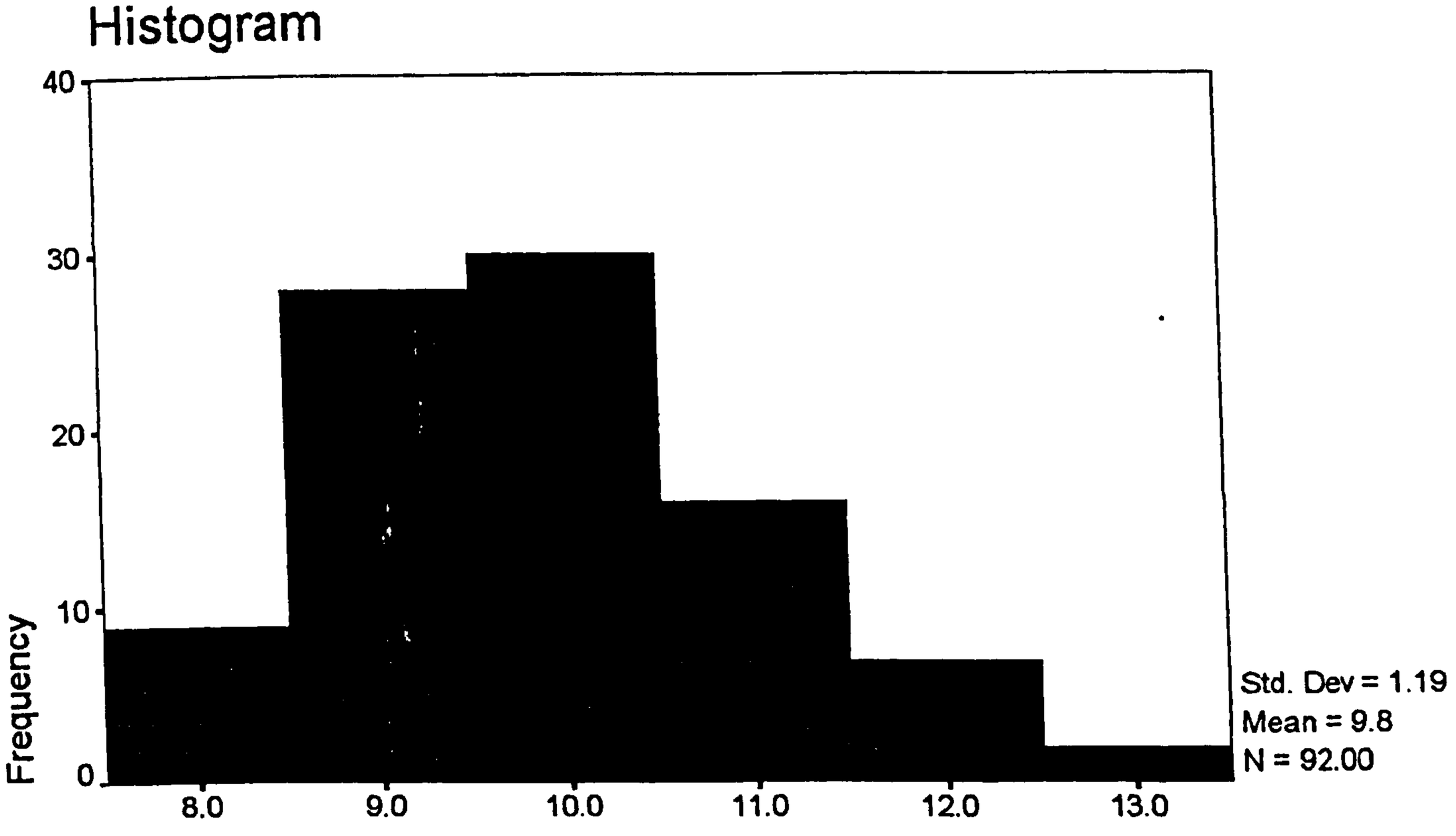


Table 5i Divisional Breakdown of Average hours worked by Airco managers

Divisional Breakdown	
Division	Average Hours worked per day
Cabin Services	10.1
Cargo	10.0
Human Resources	9.5
Finance	9.5
Marketing	10.6

Reasons

Workload pressure was cited by most respondents as the reason for the long hours they worked. Yet there was also a philosophy that long hours showed hard work, commitment and loyalty to a company and workplace culture was often given alongside workload as a reason for the long hours.

Computerisation and telephone systems like voice mail as well as the use of E-mail meant that the secretarial backup had been greatly reduced and managers were responsible for their own correspondence, meetings and memos. The technology makes it hard to ignore messages, or to sit on tasks. People demand immediate response. One manager had been out of the office for two days and found seventy two e-mails waiting for him on his return. The paradox of 'time saving' technology was apparent to me in my time there.

> If people had to actually take the time to write a letter and send it instead of almost anonymously e-mailing a memo they probably wouldn't do it, so a lot of it is rubbish, unimportant but we have to plough through it to find the important bits. (Male MG Finance)

Non senior managers' diaries were computerised and everyone had access to them so if you wanted a meeting you booked it in without asking the person involved. Senior managers' time, however, was protected by their secretaries. For many of the managers the number of meetings during the day curtailed the amount of desk work they could do and so they ended up staying late to finish it. The day is punctuated, for all managers, by meetings often in different buildings around the airport site.

> I usually have three or four meetings a day and often they are fifteen minutes walk away. About three quarters are necessary, the rest it is politically

> correct to attend. As a manager I have to go, I can't send an A7 who works for me, even if they are often the experts. (Male MG Marketing)

The airline has a culture of availability and visibility which leads people to take on too much work. No one likes to say no. Productivity is hard to measure for many of these management roles and so, possibly, the discourse of time as measure of productivity came into play quite a bit. The twenty four hour operational nature of the airline business often means it is hard to know when work is finished. The continuing buzz, well into the night and at weekends, means that staying late or going in to work on a Sunday does not seem that odd. Reasons for the long hours varied according to the division.

The relatively short hours of the Finance division (9.5 hours) were made up of the incredibly long hours worked by line finance managers and much shorter hours worked by the tax department (many of whom were women). Line finance where accountants worked out in different divisions, on the line, worked very long hours, particularly around the time of a quarterly or annual budget. These budget periods were, I was told, the nearest finance could ever get to being operational and added a measure of urgency to the division. The result of this was absenteeism following these periods and stress in managers from overwork and lack of sleep.

> We unofficially kept a league table of the people who worked the longest. The group that won were here until four in the morning. (Female SM Finance)

> I'm usually in at eight and work until seven but much later if its budget time. I take work home most weekends and I'll often come in and work on a Sunday. (Female SM, Finance)

I was told that one of the reasons for long hours in central finance was that some process workers had gone but the new process management systems that were replacing them were not yet operational. Once they were in place the workload would be reduced. There seemed to be little in the way of face time here, it was sheer workload pressure which necessitated the long hours. Finance managers on the line were responsible both to their line managers and to central finance and this often caused tension and certainly added to their hours.

Cargo (10 hours) is an operational division and so this makes a start and finish to the day hard. Yet I was told that life used to be much more relaxed before the new MD arrived. He was quite a workaholic and expected a lot of his team. He sets the pace for the managers, regularly organising 7am meetings. We can see here then that the influence of the leader is an important factor in creating a long hours culture. During the meeting for the special project, described above, after the awkward joke about having a creche on site, the Cargo MD spoke directly to the consultant who was outlining the project, saying, "I think you'll find that most of them are willing to work all hours around the clock." This war-like mission demanded total dedication, going beyond most people's sense of loyalty and commitment to their work. The use of battle terminology to describe the war against the unions helped create an environment in which people felt emotionally involved and were willing to make sacrifices - similar to those feelings of soldiers who are ready to give their lives for their country. Whilst sympathetic intellectually to working women, the MD showed no sensitivity to the conflict working mothers felt over long hours.

Marketing, curiously, showed the longest working day (10.6 hours) and yet it is non-operational and employs more senior women than in any other division in the airline. The reasons given to me for the long hours here were workload pressure

and expectation from senior management. The head of one area of the division, relationship marketing, was herself a mother of two small children.

> I work from 8am - 6pm, and then I do one and a half hours at home in the evening. I also have two hours travelling a day. (Female SM with two children, Marketing)

I asked her whether she could do her job in fewer hours , and she said she could not, that she used up her time efficiently, always having lunch at her desk and yet still had to take work home in the evenings. It is a fast-moving division with a lot of young people, ambitious for promotion and willing to give over a lot of their time.

In Human Resources there was less pressure (9.5 hours) to work such long hours than in the other divisions. It is not an operational division, requiring twenty four hour attention, and most people were working on specific projects. There was a family feel to the division, with many married women with children and the men were often described to me as family-minded men. Again, the awareness of the dangers of long hours came out of this division. Women on the fast track here took work home rather than stay in the office, a strategy I noted in many senior women throughout both case studies.

The operational nature of the division was the reason given for the long hours of Cabin Services (10.1 hours) with cabin crew coming in and out all day and most of the night.

> I guess a normal day would be 8am to about 6.30pm. I also fly about once a month (to keep up with my teams) and this can go over a weekend. There are also other commitments. I work at weekends delivering the Breakthrough programme. Then you have to go to open and closed training courses, which frequently happen at weekends too. There is also the requirement to stay overnight for team meetings. (Female MG Cabin Services)

There existed a strange paradox in this division, which I found to be very accepting of women working. There was widespread acknowledgement of the difficulties working mothers had and acceptance of taking time off for family events etc. yet there was no overt challenge to the culture of long hours, one of the biggest obstacles any working mother has to face. There was also a dedication and total involvement in this division which I found less marked in other divisions.

Organisational pressure

Some people in the airline felt that the long hours culture was introduced deliberately in the early eighties as part of the fear culture to fire up the management, which had got too comfortable in its state owned days. The former chief executive himself worked punishing hours and stories say that, in the early days of his reign, managers were expected to be prepared to do anything at a few hours notice. For instance, they might be asked at five in the evening to prepare a report for the following day. This was to keep managers on their toes. Managers also felt the need to be visible - another reason for their attendance of so many meetings. In a large complex organisation such as this it is easy to be invisible - only their presence in early morning meetings and late at night marks out a manager from a non-manager. Of course, once this cycle is in motion - expectations of both people's presence in the office and their output are raised accordingly. So, as one woman said, "If I leave at 5.30pm, my output will be a lot less than someone who is working until 7pm."

The culture of this company is work. They see it as an expectation, that people will come here, live here and die here. (Male MG Cargo)

> It seems to be the culture of the company. It seems to be, if I am honest, an expectation that people, particularly if you've got to manager level, that people will work a twelve hour day. (Male MG Marketing)

> Airco's ideal employee would be someone who doesn't show emotion, and who works 14 hours a day. (Male MG Finance)

Somehow this ten hour day has become the accepted working day for managers in Airco. Taken as a 'norm' work was sometimes then spread out accordingly, with time management being very poor.

> I suppose knowing that I am here from 8am to 6.30pm I plan to fill that time, taking that bit extra at meetings, on telephone calls etc. (Male SM Finance)

The encouragement from organisations to work long hours quickly leads to employees competing with one another over the number of hours they work, as the following conversation heard during a meeting in Finance shows.

> "What time are you in tomorrow, John ? "
> " Oh, about seven ."
> " You, Peter, ?"
> " Oh, yes, perhaps a bit before ,"

Because everyone in Airco stays late in the office the only way of marking yourself out is by coming in very early. This presenteeism, as Cary Cooper calls it, fuels itself and creates an expectation that a manager ought to be in the office early and late. The fear of missing out or being thought lazy will ensure that they all do it. One SM said, "If a manager goes home before six in the evening they can't have much to do."

<u>Seniority</u>

On average the SM's worked a full hour more each day than MG's, at 10.4 hours.

> There is a feeling here that the more senior you are the more available you have to be to the organisation. (Female SM Human Resources)

This contention in itself may inhibit women with families from seeking promotion. The more senior you are the more meetings you attend. This is one of the consequences of managing up (where managers look to a senior to endorse what they are doing and decisions get pushed upwards). We have also seen that senior managers are far more likely to be married than their female counterparts and the vast majority of male senior managers had non-working wives, who organised home life, enabling their husbands to spend ever increasing amounts of time at work. Senior managers also had secretaries who managed their time at work for them. When I was in the managing director's office in Cargo, his secretary popped her head round the door and said

> You're free from 2-3pm, this afternoon. Shall we get together? We need some quality time. (She then turned to me with a wry smile and said) I have to nag him you see.(Secretary Cargo)

When she had left the room, he said

> Three people organise me, my boss, Yvonne, my secretary and Pat, my wife. (MD Cargo)

Enjoyment of work was undoubtedly a factor in enabling these managers to work such long hours. Their loyalty and belief and desire for the airline's success made them want to work hard for it. McDowell (1997) noted the enjoyment some City workers got from their jobs and Hochschild (1997) has found that both men and women often find their work more exciting and stimulating than being at home.

Gender and time

My analysis shows that the shorter hours are worked by two groups of people in the airline, regardless of divisions - working mothers and older men. The latter may have something to do with the fact that long hours were not part of the old state owned airline culture which they would have known and also, perhaps, with the end of their career in sight and a shift in values, they were under less pressure to work long hours. However, working shorter hours - or in reality the formal working day - was not popular with other managers. A male manager in Cargo talked of a colleague who had just returned from maternity leave and was leaving work every evening at 5.30 pm

> It'll be alright if it's now and again but if it happens consistently people will get pissed off. (Male MG, Cargo)

Other women in the airline adapted their routines to fit in with the long hours culture of the airline.

> I start at 9.30 am, which is late but I wanted one part of the day with my daughter, and I think I knew in my heart that once you get into Airco it is difficult to get away at a reasonable time. (Female MG, Cargo)

Taking work home was one way working mothers found they coped with the workload although they lost brownie points for not being visible.

> I try to leave at 6pm but my boss on the main board has an infuriating habit of fixing meetings for 6pm and I have to attend. (Female SM, Marketing)

This is the woman who squeezes in one and half hours work every evening at home when the children have gone to bed.

> I work from 4-6am most mornings at home so that I can get home in the evening at a decent time and spend time with my son and husband. (Female MG, Finance)

Even women who were married but had no children found it hard. The woman MG in Cabin Services who was also an airline wife said she would like to go part-time so as to have more time running the household. On top of formal hours at work, many managers in the airline spent extra time for personal development, whether done alone or through work. There were many awaydays to further management skills and build teams, which were often held at weekends. Many I spoke to had studied for MBAs and personnel management exams in their own time at home. By any standards these managers all work long hours particularly when you consider that 88% of respondents took work home too. There were no obvious discrepancies between divisions as far as women with children were concerned apart from HR where family commitments were more apparent with both men and women and appeared to be more easily accommodated. Throughout the organisation, it appeared that this was very much down to the individual and their relationship with their boss.

A manager in HR told me that, two years beforehand, the airline had run a campaign to halt the long hours - displaying posters of family life, and telling employees that there was life outside work etc. What happened to it? No one knew. Seventy nine per cent of all respondents said that the workload infringed on their personal life and it was cited by many as one of the areas the airline could change to improve the culture for women.

Conclusion on Airco

There are a number of factors influencing the length of the working day, among them workload pressure, particularly due to the stripping away of secretarial staff. The removal of HR managers from the line meant that line managers were having to do more work. Leadership set standards, which were hard to ignore (Cargo), and budget schedules and advertising campaigns created deadlines and long hours (Marketing, Finance). The organisation as a whole made demands which led to competitiveness among managers and, perhaps, putting in some face time. Once in place, the norm of a ten hour day is hard to break and there was little in the way of resistance to the long hours culture from any quarter, despite the previous attempt from Human Resources.

The necessity of senior managers to spend more time in the organisation meant that women, particularly with families, were at a disadvantage. As the only senior manager in cargo said, "I couldn't do my job if I had children." And several other women said the same. Working mothers in all divisions coped by taking work home, thereby missing any kudos of being 'present' in the office. None of my interviewees felt that they spent unproductive time in the office, although meetings were cited by many as a bane in the working day. One consequence of a long hours culture is the stress and stress-related illness that inevitably occur. Although I did not do a lot of work in this area, it was apparent that people in the airline suffered from stress due to overload. The company doctor told me that increasing numbers of managers were suffering from stress-related symptoms. Time then acted as an exclusionary part of culture to all women, who carried other responsibilities at home, in all divisions except perhaps Human Resources, and particularly at senior levels everywhere.

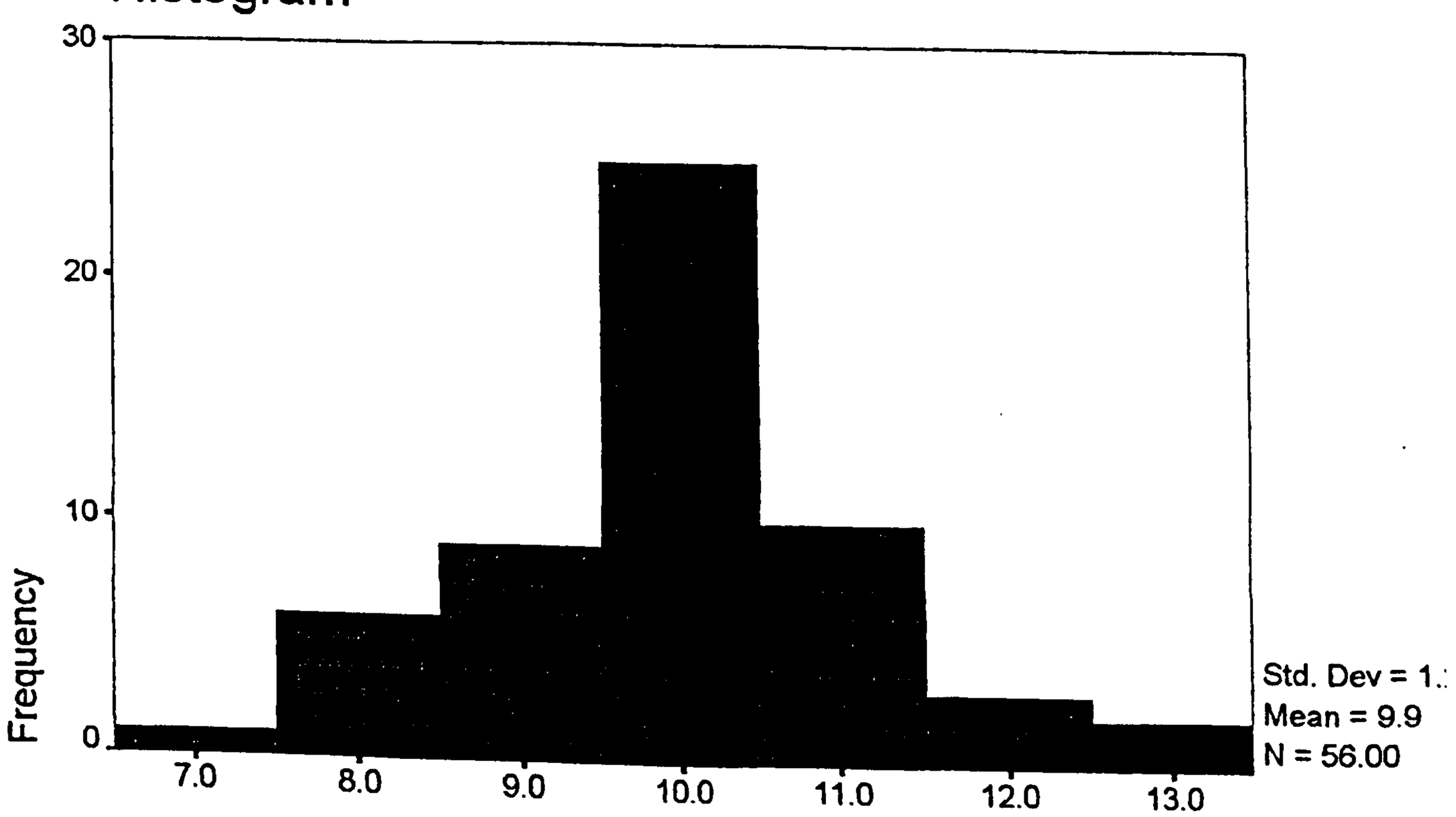
RESULTS SERCO

Again, in my second case study, I found managers and directors working very long hours, with a big variation in division and seniority. The average (mean) number of hours worked among the sample study was 9.9 hours per day, with people working longer hours the higher up the organisation they were.

Table 5ii Breakdown of average hours worked by Serco managers

Level	Hours per day
Director	10.3
Assistant Director	10.1
Manager	9.4

Histogram 5ii Frequency distribution of hours worked by Serco managers



Reason for long hours

When the City was a gentleman's occupation days were short, particularly on Fridays when bankers and brokers would leave London to go to the country for the weekend The Stock Exchange used to open at 10am and close at 4pm and, even fifteen years ago, people would start work pretty much 9am-5pm or 9.30am-5.30pm. One of the consequences of the deregulation of the Stock Exchange in 1986 has been the lengthening of the working day as the influence of global trading which forces brokers and traders to get in early to catch the Japanese market closing and stay late to see the opening of the Dow Jones and increased competition from foreign banks have been felt. An expectation to work long hours has developed as salaries have rocketed and working long days is seen as some kind of justification for earning a fortune.

There is a big divisional difference with two hours between the average day of SIM, the investment management division and ECFD, the corporate finance division.

Table 5iii **Breakdown of Average hours worked by Serco divisions**

Division	Average Hours per day
SIM	9.4
SSEC	10.2
IPD/ECFD	11.4

Traders and stockbrokers have the earliest start as the stock market opens at 8am, and the new chief executive at SSEC had recently made it even earlier. Morning meetings, where analysts tell brokers any relevant new or results, now take place at

7.30am and all sales desk and analysts have to attend. If they are commenting on results the analysts will have to be in even earlier in order to prepare what they are going to say.

> I get in at around seven in the morning, which is about one hour earlier than in my last job, which means leaving the house at 6.15am. I typically leave at around 6.30/7pm although if I have a set of results coming through or I am writing up notes after a trip I will be here until 8, 9, 10, even, 11pm It's all part of the new regime - the burden is on us analysts to produce more, market more. (Female analyst, Director SSEC)

SIM, the fund management arm, is much more civilised and the hours quite predictable. Although for them too the day is longer than it was fifteen years ago, the standard day of 8.30am -6.30pm was one with which most of the interviewees were happy. Their morning meeting was a sensible, lunchtime one at 12.15pm, because it was felt more important to know how the market had started in the morning and discuss the day's events. Each fund manager gets on with their own work, checking their fund's performances, writing reports for trustees and talking to stockbrokers about new investments. This is the division with the most women in it.

The days in corporate finance, ECFD, start later at about 8.30am but the pressure to do long hours is more intense here than any other part of the bank. The long and anti-social hours are deemed necessary because of the arbitrary nature of the business. When a deal has to be completed, there is always a deadline. This often means that when you are working on a transaction ie a merger or acquisition, take over or privatisation issue, you will be up all night on several occasions, as well as possibly working weekends. Also, presentations to pitch for new business have to be prepared and, as this is not core work, it is often done in the evenings and weekends. These crucial times explain some of ludicrously long hours put in periodically but

they do not explain why people routinely stay in their office late in the evening. Here, then, the culture comes into play where working long hours is seen as evidence of commitment in a division where there is a higher element of competition than elsewhere in the bank. Corporate Finance has always been an elitist area of the investment world and was virtually closed to women as little as twenty years ago. There are plenty of young people more than happy to put their social lives on hold to work long hours and work their way up the ladder. The discourse of time here is used by the organisation to qualify certain members and disqualify others.

> I don't mind women working here as long as they put in the hours. (Male Director, ECFD)

One senior director told me

> It *is* ludicrous for the young to work these hours and be sitting here at ten o' clock at night. On the other hand if I saw someone regularly going home at six thirty, then I'd think that he can't have much work to do and I'd better give him some more! Laughter (Male Director, ECFD)

> My day starts at 8.30am and, with about one half hour for lunch, I leave at around eight o'clock - that's when I'm not busy. Otherwise I am here till midnight at least. (Female Ass Director, ECFD)

Although workload pressure was given as the main reason for the long hours, some interviewees acknowledged that there was a lot of face time put in in the evenings, that working late is seen as a sign of commitment.

> I can do this job in fewer hours. But it will be seen as not giving the commitment. Being visible is a way of drawing attention to yourself. You are noticed more by being here at ten at night than by consistently producing a good product. (Female Manager, ECFD)

Again, as in the airline, there was an element of macho competition over the number of hours worked. "We had to do a presentation with only one week's notice recently and one chap worked 115 hours that week," said a senior ECFD director, with a certain amount of pride in his voice.

Senior directors seemed unconcerned about the length of the day and indeed it seemed to be useful as a way of sorting out the 'men' from the 'boys', testing their stamina and commitment. It reminded me of the way consultants talk about the junior housemen and the number of hours they have to work, "we've all done it, you've just got to get through it."

The other important factor in this division is the extremely high salaries that can be earned here, which may explain why people are willing to put their home lives on continual hold to spend more time in the office. In a good year, as they have had in the past few years, a corporate finance assistant director can expect to earn about £400,000 and more senior directors who are successful in their deals can easily earn well over one million pounds. Desire for wealth then can also be one of the explanations as to why they work such long hours. There is a lot at stake, the rewards are high and plenty of others want it.

Gender and time

Perhaps more than in other division, the long hours and the irregularity of the hours makes working in corporate finance very difficult for women with children. One woman director had recently left, because of the conflict of home and work.

> The strain of going abroad and working at weekends was beginning to show on me and the family. (Former female Director ECFD)

This former director is an expert in a very esoteric area of finance and was a great loss to the bank, which she said did nothing to help her manage, and she now works for one of her previous bank clients two days a week whilst 'freelancing' another couple of days.

The only remaining woman at director level in corporate finance is 'Superwoman', who has five children. She distinguishes herself immediately.

> I am not typical, because I have children. I get in to work by 8am and then I leave as early as possible, say 6.30pm If there is an important meeting, obviously I have to stay but I try very hard for that not to happen. I will then fit my work in by getting up and working from say 4am to 7am in the morning.You do have to be bloody good. I only work in the morning like that if I have to - not for the sake of it but simply to get through the volume of work. I hate working late at night but I do if I have a deal coming to a head. But I am certainly the only one in this division to leave here at 6.30pm (Female Director, ECFD)

A manager in ECFD had requested to do shorter hours in lieu of a promotion so that she could at least see her small son in the evenings - her shorter hours were to be able to leave at 6.30pm. Permission had still not been granted. One female analyst in SSEC had a small baby.

> I leave the house at 6.45 am and try to get home by 7pm I see her for five minutes in the morning and then half an hour at night but then she has to go to bed. Even if I leave at 6pm no one says anything but I know the work is there, the pressure is there, it's very subtle. Sometimes I come in at 5am to finish a report. (Female Manager, analyst SSEC)

The predictability of fund management hours makes it overtly more attractive to women with children. The MD, herself a mother of two small children, got in at 9am and left at 7pm, or earlier if she could. She felt that she needed to work those hours to get through the workload but felt that those below her could work less.

Conclusion on Serco

The division with the most sociable, regular hours is fund management, perhaps one reason why women are attracted to going there. There are other merchant banks where women work part time in fund management although this move was being resisted here. Securities is usually not too bad in terms of hours although the early mornings are getting earlier. If you sell UK stocks, you can usually go home when the market closes at five. Of course, meetings do occur and this can lengthen the day and, as the analysts in my study said they were under pressure to produce more research and had to work longer. Traders start very early but, again, can go home when the markets close because they have little in the way of paper work to do. The anti-social hours of the corporate finance, together with their irregularity, make it particularly difficult for working mothers. The unrelenting demand on a manager's time by this division goes unchallenged. There was certainly an element of justifying both the high salaries earned here and the high status of corporate finance, plus the official belief that the job just could not be done in a normal working day. As in the airline, the senior woman in corporate finance took work home if she needed to. Indeed, her insistence on leaving at 6.30 pm showed that the extra evening hours may not always be necessary for the others either.

CONCLUSION

The development of a long hours culture and its connection to some form of masculinity, derived from men's ability to draw more freely on time than women because of the domestic division of labour, can be encouraged by organisations which need their workers to take on extra workloads. I think it is useful to see time as a resource that men have more access to than women and it is a resource that is currently being demanded by organisations. The ability to work long hours has now become an management attribute. My research shows this convergence then of desires/interests between a certain sort of masculinity (as offering something that women could not) and organisational interests.

There may also be different reasons for the long hours in different areas of work. It is an aspect of culture that is easily manipulated by senior management as attested to by the fact that it was introduced by the former Chief Executive of the airline. Leaders' expectations forge the pattern for the working day, either by the hours they themselves work, as in the case of Cargo in Airco, or by the demands they make on their managers, as in the case of Serco's securities division. In the securities division the leader wanted the highly paid members of his division to justify their money and he thought they could boost their productivity by working longer hours. In Airco, the twenty four hour operational apect of the business made it difficult to view work as over at the end of the day, particularly so in Cabin Services when the workforce arrives at the offices at all hours of the day and night.

Internal competition, particularly in areas of high salaries (corporate finance) can fuel the long hours culture as fear of missing out makes people stay longer and longer in the office. The long hours worked by senior directors ensures that they keep their

hold on their positions. If they weren't there someone else might start making decisions for them and they would be shown up to be redundant. There was also the expectation in both organisations that the more senior you were, and the more you earned, the more hours you worked. The business rationale for this was not challenged in either organisation.

According to Hochschild (1997), work was becoming a more attractive place to spend time than home. I found evidence that men would wait until they knew home was orderly i.e.children had been bathed and put to bed, but not that women did the same. All the women with children I met avoided spending long hours in the office if they were able to, by taking work home. Those that were not able to felt guilty and very often upset.

A recent Demos report (Wilkinson and Howard 1997) was optimistic about the future prospects of part-time work for managers but I found absolutely no evidence for any optimism in my research. There was almost universal acceptance that the long hours were an integral part of the job. In the open-ended question on ways in which the organisations could improve their culture for women, the majority of comments concerned long hours.

> I don't feel I could work in a more senior position because of my family commitments and the expectations that I can work all hours, basically be on call all the time. To change we need a culture that says it's OK to work shorter hours. (Female MG, Human Resources)

My research findings suggest that in areas of prestige and high status, e.g. the senior levels in both organisations and in corporate finance in the bank, the long hours act as a form of closure to exclude women. At a time when women can offer almost

everything that men can in terms of ability, skills and experience, time becomes the differentiating feature which makes men more suitable than women. Access to the resource of time was vital to be a successful manager in both organisations. There are two points here, first, is the fact that women are less likely to have the same access to time as men because of the gendered division of labour, and second is the criticism that working more than eight or nine hours a day is not something conducive to a healthy lifestyle. Women in my research viewed work as one part of their life and, even when single, showed awareness of the dangers of spending too much time at work.

> I used to almost live here but I've been trying recently, to be more sensible about my hours and make sure that I have a life for myself outside work. Too many people here don't. (Female MG Airco)

The endurance of the long hours cultures in organisations is testimony to the fact that, for most senior men, their wives looked after the domestic side of life. Thus their time was made available by their wives at home and monitored and policed by their secretaries at work. The unspoken understanding that men belong at work and women have responsibilities elsewhere allows the long hours culture to flourish. I develop this concept of the home/work divide in the next chapter.

CHAPTER SIX

PUBLIC/PRIVATE DIVIDE

INTRODUCTION

In this chapter I want to explore how the separation of home (private) and work (public) may pervade an organisational culture and have an impact on men and women in different ways, both in a material sense and through the gendered representations that this dualism brings about - for instance woman as mother, man as breadwinner. The public/private divide is becoming an important focus for research into gender and organisations (Massey 1993,1997; Halford, Savage and Witz 1997; Lewis and Lewis 1996). An organisation's culture indicates whether this divide is marked or being challenged, and whether it is being challenged on behalf of women only or for both women and men. The divide holds many representations of gender and ideologies which have repercussions in the workplace (Halford, Savage and Witz 1997). It has very real practical problems for women who may carry a dual burden, but it also provides a rationale for organisations to be wary and even discriminate against women - 'she's bound to be off having a baby in a few years.' It also provides men with a distinct advantage in that they are not held responsible for domestic affairs, including their own bodily needs.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The idea that home remains separate from work retains popular appeal and carries with it particularly gendered notions of being. Home is where the heart is, the place of refuge when work is over and a place of privacy. This image is a male defined one because, for most women, it is a place of hard work, done for love not money,

and whilst it may hold emotional fulfilment for many, sadly for others its privacy may permit domination and violence from their male partners. Work is where a public face is put on, where people socialise and make history, where progress occurs and for which people are paid. Until very recently public was male. We know that this private patriarchy is breaking down to some extent (Walby 1990, 1997) with a big increase in divorce and growth in single parent households, combined with women entering the workforce in greater numbers. Yet neither the erosion of the boundaries nor feminist critiques of this dualism of home/work (Acker 1990; Smith 1987; Massey 1993, 1997) detract from its power as a "connotational system" (Massey 1997 p.115).

The image of a real worker is still one who is committed to life long, full time work, although recent economic changes and the instability of markets has meant that a worker may expect to change occupations several times in 'his' career (Handy 1995). However, when working for an organisation, there is the assumption that the worker is prepared to give it 'his' all and that his needs and those of his children, both bodily and emotionally, will be met by his wife or partner. The more important the job the more hours are required to be worked. This concept of a job is implicitly a gendered concept, containing a gender based division of labour - the gendered organisation of domestic life and social production (Acker 1990,1992).

> These practices and relations, encoded in arrangements and rules, are supported by assumptions that work is separate from the rest of life and that it has the first claim on the work. (Acker 1992 p.255)

Women, increasingly entering the public world of work, may have other obligations, and thus

> The woman worker assumed to have legitimate obligations other than those required by the job does not fit with the abstract job.(Acker 1992 p.131)

Often this spillover (Gutek 1989) of roles into the workplace result in a situation where

> Women work in and around the professional and managerial scene in analogous ways, they do things that give concrete form to the conceptual activities, e.g. secretarial and clerical work - giving material form to the words and thoughts of the boss. The medical receptionist dealing with the clients before the consultant sees them etc... (Smith 1987 p.68)

The two worlds of work and home are usually spatially and temporally dislocated, but these boundaries are being eroded. Home has become porous as worklife seeps into it, both spacially and temporally. This is particularly so for professional and managerial groups. People take work home in the evenings and at weekends, they have communication links at home, computers, faxes, e-mails and mobile phones. They are available to work even when they are at home. Yet, apart from a few workplace nurseries, the responsibilities of home life have not invaded work space. Massey notes with irony that the mechanism for resistance to this encroachment on home life is to protect home life from intrusion and thereby reinforce the dualism (Massey 1997).

Although the private work of home has not been carried into the public workplace, there has been a trend whereby work incorporates leisure (McDowell 1997). Apart from people enjoying their jobs large corporations offer on site facilities for all kinds of leisure activities. Modern day offices for large corporations now usually include coffee bars, restaurants, gymnasiums and swimming pools as well as being concerned with design features like pictures, atriums, and potted plants. It is, however, geared towards the young and single who spend so long at work that most

of their friends are there and they end up spending leisure time with them too. It also provides an attractive work environment where people are comfortable spending most of their time. Hochschild (1997) notes that home and home neighbourhoods are becoming wastelands as work becomes the focus of both men and women's lives and their children are in daycare.

Women's work in the home is inadequately acknowledged publicly or privately - occasionally an insurance claim to replace the labour done by a deceased wife reminds society of the value of her work - and in the workplace women's work too is very often poorly paid and undervalued. For women to succeed on male terrain, they need to rid themselves of all vestiges of home. For some this is easy, for others it requires enormous psychic effort (Davidson and Cooper 1992). Crossing the boundaries may provoke some discomfort for men who associate, or wish to associate, women with home (Gherardi 1995). This may be more true for the older generation of men than for the young. The perennial threat or reality of pregnancy and lactation, each belonging as they do to the private, disturbs the abstract rational world of work. Babies, children, as well as old people, many disabled and handicapped people, sickness both physical and mental are absent from the workplace. Bringing reproduction into the workplace can disturb men at work (Martin 1990). The publicity surrounding the 'Take your Daughter to Work' day that has taken place for two years now illustrated how unusual it is for children to enter the workplace.

Whilst women have entered the public world of work, their 'domestic hat' must be worn by someone else, and in my research as in others this burden is carried by other women - mothers, nannies, cleaners etc., but rarely husbands. The inroads that women have made into the realms of the male world of work have not been

accompanied by similar inroads on the part of men into the domestic world of women. There may be some evidence that men are taking a little more responsibility for home life (Irwin 1995; Vogler 1994), but others contest this view saying that there has been no significant change (Cowan 1983; Arber and Ginn 1995). Women's burden at home is being eased not by their partners but by the proliferation of home services to do the household chores. In America now dinners can be bought at some childcare centres so that no one has to cook when they get home (Hochschild 1997). Over here, supermarkets are offering more delivery services, children's parties can be organised by specialists and dogs can be walked by professional dog walkers. However all this help has to be managed and paid for, and it is usually by the woman. The uncritical acceptance by organisations and society and women themselves that a working woman carries a dual burden may be evidence enough that no real change in domestic responsibilities is expected. The dual burden acts as a major obstacle to women achieving positions of seniority in organisations (Lewis and Lewis 1996; Colgan and Ledwith 1995).

A recent magazine survey of 5000 working women showed that one in three felt defeated by the pressures of work and home.[1] For a shift of power away from men in organisations to be the inevitable outcome of women succeeding in organisations, a shift in the domestic arena is required, with men taking on more responsibility at home. As Doreen Massey puts it, if an employee works fourteen hours a day, *someone else has to carry the other side of life.* (Massey 1993 p.21)

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[1]Evening Standard , Monday 24th April 1995. Susan de Vere who organised the study for Top Sante magazine said . " Women are exhausted as men still do not want to share the responsibilities at home . Men have made a token gesture of being a 'new' men , perhaps by changing a few nappies but they would still rather sneak off for a pint after work and hope that by the time they get home the children and housework have been dealt with." The report revealed that 76% of women felt they have too many roles to perform nowadays , 25% are stressed most of the time , and 54% feel exhausted at least once a week.

A lot of the women in management literature concerns itself with the accommodation of women into the organisations. Research has looked at the impact of family friendly policies on the careers of the women who take them up (Marcus 1996; Lewis and Taylor 1996). But some work on the practice of equal opportunities is also starting to critique the taken for granted public/private divide and the inevitability of working mothers carrying dual burdens (Lewis and Lewis 1996).

> It is important at this stage to take stock and ask to what extent traditional assumptions about the separation of work and personal lives are being challenged by current workplace initiatives and how further progress can be encouraged. (Lewis 1996 p.1)

The provision of family friendly policies has been criticised for its add on approach, which can detract from the need to examine current policies and practices which can be hostile to family life, such as willingness to relocate or work long hours (Lewis 1996 p.5).

Hochschild's recent study showed that one of the reasons why women were not taking up family friendly policies, like reducing their hours was because they did not want to spend any more time in the home, *not* only because they feared a setback in their careers. She argued that this was because they gained status and value at work but not at home, which often represented a more stressful environment for them than work (1997).

> Women fear losing their places at work, and having such a place has become a source of security, pride and a powerful sense of being valued. Cutting back on work hours means loosening ties to a world that, tension-filled as it is, offers insurance against even greater tension and uncertainty at home. For a substantial number of time bound working parents the stripped-down home

> and the community denuded neighbourhood are simply losing out to the pull of the workplace. (Hochschild 1997 p.247)

I test this hypothesis on my data, looking at reasons why family friendly policies were or were not taken up by women. Did I notice that women were unwilling to cut back on hours and spend more time at home if they were able to, and if so what were the reasons for this?

The separation of home and work is one that pervades the culture of most organisations. Certainly, in many cases it is in the interests of the organisation to mark off the private as beyond their concern (Halford, Savage and Witz 1997). They have encouraged people to drop their private concerns as they walk through the door into work. This separation is actively constructed through policies like sick leave and maternity leave. Personal difficulties are the realm of the personnel staff or, in large organisations, counsellors. Sick leave and maternity leave allow for out of the ordinary bodily needs to be dealt with away from the office. In practice, however, there can be no such neat separation. Try as people might to keep home life in a box at home, life experiences are not that tidy. On many occasions special situations need to be dealt with at work with sensitivity and care - bereavements, serious illnesses, adoptions and these concerns cannot be left at the front door. Yet these artificial boundaries are constructed according to male centred assumptions about the extent to which the private can be marked off from the public and prove to be highly problematic for women. In my interviews I found, like Halford, Savage and Witz (1997) that women talked without prompting of their home life, husbands, partners and children as being an important element of their work life. With the men I had to ask about their private lives, although one young man spoke voluntarily of his divorce.

The dualism carries with it representations of gender and ideologies, which have repercussions for the ways in which women at work are perceived. Women as mothers fit uneasily into the work realm and it is over women's potential and actual reproductive capacities that the ideological boundaries are most challenged. I am interested in the ways in which an organisation incorporates the private/public dualism into its culture, or perhaps challenges it, and what effect this has on women managers. Does the assumption pervade the workplace culture? Are there areas where it is being challenged? What impact, if any, does the cultural expression of these values make on women and or the men who work there? Are there differences? There may, for instance be a difference between an organisation which emphasises women's biological difference and reproductive role and one which emphasises women's sameness to men, which may ignore the difficulties and perhaps force women to keep their 'home life' away from work. Did the workplace culture acknowledge that work was not just confined to waged work in the organisation? If so, how were working mothers accommodated? Does having the tag prospective mother round her neck inhibit a woman manager's progress? Was motherhood compatible with work? Were working mothers keen to cut back on their hours and what were the consequences of this? To what extent does work incorporate home and vice versa - evidence of blurring boundaries? Were there differences between the divisions and/or organisations? I might expect to find that the organisation with a developed equal opportunities policy and many women managers is willing to accommodate home into work more than the organisation with no such policy. Leadership may be important here as they may set an example of how to incorporate home and work and/or perhaps not always assume that work is the priority. Breaking open the home/work divide does not just have an impact on equal opportunity and family friendly policies, it inevitably problematises the meaning of

work and the domestic division of labour which structures our prevailing working day.

METHODS

I gained quite a bit of the data for this section through the questionnaire, although I found that women interviewees were only too ready to talk about their home/work conflicts. Questions in the survey asked respondents about their marital status, whether they had children and how many, and who took main responsibility for the home. I asked whether their department /organisation was accommodating of their home life, and whether they felt a conflict between home and work. I asked them about their organisation's attitudes to working mothers, their department's attitudes and lastly their own attitudes. The open ended question on whether the organisation was doing enough to create a culture that was supportive for women provided some good data for this section. In the interviews, if women had children, I asked them about their childcare arrangements and how they managed the dual burden, and whether they felt the organisation helped them at all. I talked to the men about their families , their partners and their role at home.

RESULTS AIRCO

Airco fostered a family culture. It provided all kinds of after work activities for its employees, ski clubs, all sports clubs, amateur dramatics etc. yet most of these were geared towards the young single people. The high profile of equal opportunities and various family friendly policies and the importance and size of the Human Resources division means that the workplace is not devoid of home concerns. The airline's public embracement of family friendly policies which included part-time work for

administrative staff and some management positions, created a culture which incorporated to some extent the concept of working mother but, scratching the surface, it became apparent that the ideal manager, and the norm, was still male with a dependent wife, and working mothers were forced to chase this norm too. This involved delegating as many of the household responsibilties on to other people as were possible, involving a lot of time and energy.

A glance at the figures on marital status shows that senior women are far less likely to be married or have children than their male counterparts, backing up other research (Marshall 1984; Halford, Savage and Witz 1997).

Table 6i Marital Status of Airco managers

Management Group	Married	Cohabiting	Children
Men	47%(7)	20%(3)	40%(6)
Women	35%(19)	35%(12)	35%(17)
Senior Managers			
Men	72%(13)	10%(2)	61%(11)
Women	48%(10)	14%(3)	23%(5)

sample size 97

There was a discrepancy between the percentage of male SMs who were married compared to the female SMs - 72% compared to 48%, and nearly three times as many male Senior Managers had children as female Senior Managers. Only one married man took responsibility for home and he had no children. There is a double effect here, the married men are more likely to be taken care of, and their domestic lives organised by their wives, thereby giving them an advantage in time and energy over even a single woman.

Table 6 ii **Who takes main domestic responsibility? - All Airco managers**

	Men	Women
Me	28 % (9)	70% (44)
My partner	53 % (17)	14.% (9)
Shared	19 % (6)	16% (10)
	1 miss.	
		sample size 97

	Married Men	Married Women
Me	5% (1)	59% (17)
My partner	70% (14)	24% (7)
Shared	25% (5)	15% (5)
		sample size 49

Table 6iii Who takes domestic responsibility? Airco Senior Management only

	Married Men	Married Women
Me	0% (0)	70% (7)
My partner	77% (10)	10% (1)
Shared	23% (3)	20% (2)
		sample size 23

The above figures illustrate how the dual burden effects women far more than men, particularly at senior level. The senior men I spoke to in interviews were all married and had wives who took responsibility at home. Some of their wives worked part-time. They all said that they did not see enough of their families and they paid tribute to the amount of work their wives had to do alone because they were never there. Generally the men were aware enough to praise what their wives did and not take it for granted. So this sample represented perhaps some small evidence of shifting

attitudes, brought about by women's demands for additional or alternative roles. The MD of Cargo said

> I had a real shock last year because my wife is doing a degree in languages and she spent six months abroad as part of it. That left me to deal with our youngest son, aged twelve and I could hardly cope. I'm glad she's back but it made me appreciate how much she does at home. (SM, male cargo)

Is it appreciation women want or a change in the balance of partnership? One single mother in her early fifties said that the office all laughed when she went out to the bank at lunch time or had to do other 'household chores'.

> It's alright for them, they have wives to do it for them, I'm on my own.(Female Manager, Cargo)

The luxury of having a wife to take on all the domestic side of life leaves senior men free to invest all their energy in their work which gives them an immediate advantage over a similarly married woman. We can see here how the material demands of family life disadvantages women in management in as much as it uses up their resources of time and energy. This fact is illustrated by the figures below which show that women experience a much greater conflict between home and work than men do.

Table 6 iv Is there a conflict between home and work ?

	Men	Women
YES	39% (13)	62% (39)
NO	61% (22)	39% (25)

sample size 97

A much higher percentage of women (62%) than of men (39%) felt the conflict between work and home. All of the mothers I interviewed, apart from one whose husband had taken early retirement, carried the dual burden of home and work. Many would work at home in the evenings or early in the mornings so that they could see their children for some of the day. The actual job of mothering is rarely analysed, it is usually described succinctly as childcare but in reality it is much more than being a mere presence 'minding' children. Apart from the enormous amount of emotional work involved, the organisational skills required to plan for your children's lives, regardless of whether you are at home full time or not, is considerable. Shopping for food and their clothes, laundry, preparation of meals, seeing to their hobbies, friends' visits, birthdays to remember, presents to buy, after school activities, school matches etc., communication with teachers, let alone organising activities in the holidays cannot all be delegated to a paid help. 'Managing the nanny' was a phrase I heard several times from working mothers. The nanny is an employee and as such brings with her a whole set of responsibilities, her pay, tax, insurance and most importantly her well being, all of which fall on the working mother. When I asked one senior woman whether her home skills helped her at work, she replied that it was her work skills that helped her organise her home. Nicola Horlick has said in her book about having it all, that her whole life depended on her nanny, who had been with her for eight years and without whom she could not cope. All the women I spoke to said that without their outside support network - good nannies , husbands and families to back them up they would be lost.

I have a brilliant nanny who has been with us for four years. I totally trust her and work hard to make sure she is happy. If she asks for a pay rise she gets it, I need her. (Female SM, Marketing)

Most of the married women managers I interviewed had husbands who worked as long or even longer hours than them. The exceptions were the two women whose husbands had taken early retirement and one of these took responsibility for the home. Both women were mindful of the fact that there was tension around them being out at work leaving their husbands at home.

> He hates it when I'm too late, especially if I haven't told him so I try to keep sensible hours. (Female MG, Cargo)

The only visible concession to the incorporation of home life into the airline was the nursery. However, it was criticised as being of little use to managers because of its short hours.

> Getting out of work at 5.30 p.m. to pick up my child from the nursery was almost impossible. I had to move him to an outside one. (Female Manager, Cargo)

Arlie Hochschild's book 'The Time Bind' highlights just how long children have to be left in childcare if their parents are both in management jobs (1997).

One manager in Cabin Services said that she struggled to cope with the demands of work and home life even though she did not have children. She was married to a senior airline executive and as such she had her role as an airline wife. This involved a certain amount of entertaining in the evenings as well as getting everything organised in the house, shopping, cooking etc..

There is evidence that the boundary between work and leisure is sometimes blurred. The divide of work/leisure is another inappropriate dualism when applied to women. The notion is culturally built into our concept of work and again is

gendered because the assumption is that when a male worker is not 'at work' he is at play, i.e. on the golf course, in the pub or spending time with the family which always conjures up images of dad sitting in the sitting room reading a newspaper while mother cooks the Sunday roast. A glance at the local tennis courts on a Saturday morning shows most players are men. For working women there is little play time because there is work to do as soon as she gets home. The mothers that I interviewed spent all free time they had with their children and on household chores.

> I used to play a lot of sport, go to the gym but that's out now. I shop on Saturdays and play with my children for the rest. (Female SM, Marketing)

Another invisible factor in women carrying the dual burden is the psychic effort involved in cutting out home from work. Guilt was felt by many of my interviewees.

> Of course I feel guilty. I mean it was half term last week and I wasn't there for one day. I hardly see them at all during the week. I feel guilty all the time. It is why I have to be so good at my job, I've sacrificed a lot and I have to make it worth it. (Female SM Marketing)

One HR manager told me that she had often come across senior women managers who were very distressed by leaving their children so much or, on occasions, mothers upset because they have had to leave an ill child. This psychological stress is rarely acknowledged outside the private door of a sympathetic HR manager and that is in an organisation where there are many sympathetic HR managers. It was much harder for some of the women in the bank, where the emotion of missing a child was not acknowledged at all .

Gendered representations of the home/work divide. The acceptance of mothers as workers

Given the very high rate (89%) of women returning to work after taking maternity leave, which did not vary across the divisions, I expected to find a high degree of tolerance towards working mothers, perhaps even encouragement from the airline. I wanted to differentiate between individuals' attitudes and what they thought their department's and organisation's attitudes were.

Table 6v Attitudes to Working Mothers - Airco Women Respondents

	Positive	Neutral	Negative
Your attitude	75% (47)	23% (15)	1% (1) 1miss.
Department's attitude	35% (22)	59% (37)	6% (4) 1miss.
Organisation's attitude	23% (14)	63% (39)	15%(2) 2miss.
			sample size 64

Table 6vi Attitudes to Working Mothers - Airco Male Respondents

	Positive	Neutral	Negative
Your attitude	79% (26)	21% (7)	
Department's attitude	61% (20)	31% (10)	9% (3)
Organisation's attitude	46%(15)	52%(17)	3%(1)
			sample size 33

The first point here is the huge discrepancy between the women respondents attitudes compared to what they perceived the organisations' attitude to working mothers to be.

- **75%** of the women had a positive attitude themselves towards working mothers but only,
- **23%** of them thought that the organisation had a positive attitude and
- **14%** thought the organisation had a negative attitude.

A slightly higher percentage of men had a positive attitude to working mothers than the women themselves. This could be due to a number of factors. It may be that the prevailing culture of equal opportunities promotes this attitude in men, or that they feel they have to say positive things because of the culture whilst perhaps harbouring less than positive thoughts, or that this sample of men would think positively about working mothers wherever they worked. What is interesting is that they overestimate the attitudes of both the department and the organisation compared to what the women respondents thought. Almost double the percentage of men than of women thought their organisation and department held positive attitudes to working mothers. This may be accounted for by the gap between the rhetoric of the company's equal opportunities policy and the actual operation of realistically viable policies aimed at working mothers in the organisation. My qualitative data showed that women felt that the organisation paid lip service to the notion of working mothers. Most of the women I interviewed said that the accommodation of home life depended entirely on their individual boss.

Table 6vii Is your department accommodating of your home life? Breakdown by sex at Airco

	Men	Women
YES	77% (24)	53% (34)
NO	23% (3)	47% (26)
	6 miss.	4 miss.

sample size 97

Table 6viii Is your department accommodating of your home life Breakdown by division at Airco

	YES%(no.)	NO%(no.)
Cabin Services	75 (12)	25 (4)
Cargo	62 (8)	38 (5) (1miss.)
Human Resources	70 (21)	27 (8)
Finance	53 (16)	39 (12) (2miss.)
Marketing	46 (7)	46 (7) (2 miss.)

sample size 97

Cabins Services and Human Resources were the departments most accommodating of home life. This was reflected in the qualitative data. A much higher percentage of men (77%) thought that their department accommodated their home life than of women (53%).This reflects perhaps that they had less 'home life responsibilities' to be accommodated. The accommodation of home life into work life appeared to be down to individuals rather than divisional or organisational policy.

> I take the provision of a creche as their lip service to equal opportunities. They need to be being seen to do something, but I hold no store by it. I manage because of the support of my team and my boss. (Female MG, Cabin Services)

> I thought that X would be a family friendly company but it is totally down to personalities and how sympathetic they are to your position. (Female SM, Marketing, recruited from an American company)

> My last boss was great. He knew I had to pick up Chris from the nursery so he would make sure meetings didn't go on late. This one's not good though and I've had to employ someone at home to look after Chris. (Female MG, Cargo)

Children, more than anything else, are at odds with the workplace and women, as primary carers, often have to go to great lengths to distance their concerns from those at work. Childcare problems are considered a nuisance and intrude on work time. Looking after their welfare is never considered to be evidence of responsibility, but rather lack of commitment to the job. Picking up a child on time is rarely considered a good enough reason for leaving the office.

One very senior woman told me that most people in the airline would be surprised if they knew she had children, which she took as a compliment meaning that she managed her home life so well that it never infringed on work life. Yet work life continually infringes on home life. Here, then, is an example of how the boundaries of home/work are being crossed only one way (Massey 1997). This particular woman took work home every evening and worked for one and a half hours after her children were in bed. Yet many people around the airline did not know that she had children and she took that to mean she 'managed' it all so well. It is inconceivable to think that a man in that position would feel proud if people did not know he had children.

Potentially disruptive - the prospect of motherhood

I found evidence that women were aware that pregnancy might not be good for their career prospects. It is not only the practical aspects of home life, but the perception that all women are eventually destined to retreat to the home, which acts against the interests of women who want to be judged only on their work.

A female SM in finance recently sent out a note asking about the division's policy on job share and flexible working, ostensibly for her A7s (administration team) - she

did not want to include MGs and SMs in case people thought that she was planning a family herself! - and she received a reply that it was down to the individual managers concerned and that there would be no divisional policy.

> This is very, very short sighted because we have a hell of a lot of female managers who are coming up to childbearing age and getting married and we are just not planning for them. (Female SM, Finance)

Another woman manager from Cargo had not changed her name following her recent marriage because she said that the change in status would alert people to her age and they would assume she would be starting a family, which she thought would dash hopes of promotion, "I've seen it happen often enough to others" she said.

Concluding comments - divisional differences

As a well publicised equal opportunity employer the airline, of course, had to acknowledge the dual role that most working mothers carry. Whilst the airline had introduced some family friendly policies, like establishing a job share register for managers, introducing some part-time work for managers, setting up a workplace nursery, the prevailing culture was that home matters were private and best left there.

> I don't consider childcare to be an organisational issue. How people manage their family life is their own business. Obviously if there is a crisis, people can take time off but the day to day management of childcare etc. I don't consider to be an airline matter. (Male Senior Director, Airco)

The practice of ignoring childcare concerns is effectively undercutting the ideal of equal opportunities but the statement of the ideal allows the respondents to buy into a particular kind of liberalism (Wetherell, Stiven and Potter 1989).

However the situation was ameliorated by a large number of senior men who were sympathetic to the problems that working mothers had. This was particularly so in Cabin Services where people knew each other extremely well and had forged quite close working relationships. One woman manager had recently split up with her partner and had asked her team to give her a few days off work to sort herself out. Even so, although home was brought into work more than in any other division, Cabin Services managers worked very long hours which did not exactly help family life.

Human Resources had the highest number of working mothers and had more flexible working arrangements than other departments, which may be expected given that these 'family friendly' policies are formulated out of this department. One of its most senior directors, although not on the main board, was a woman who had three small children and she had been responsible for promoting support for working mothers. The division had introduced some job sharing and part-time working at manager level.

In Finance there was total neglect of the issue, much to the frustration of some of the younger women. The attempt described above by the woman who wanted some clarification on policy for part-timers, shows the reluctance in that department to address the issues.

In Marketing where there were a lot of women managers, there were very few with children because of their youth. One senior woman in marketing did work part-time after she had her children and was cited as a good role model by many women in the organisation. She had been a high flier and very ambitious but had decided to slow

down when she became a mother. I got the feeling that her good political contacts gained in the earlier part of her career, gave her quite a powerful position from which to demand her part time role. Another senior manager with two children in Marketing told me that she could never go part time because

> You miss out on all the exciting bits. You cannot really do a senior job part-time and you get seconded on to projects all the time rather than dealing with top level policy and operations. (Female SM, Marketing)

Even the young men who were 'pro' women scoffed at the thought of part time work.

> It's just a no-no. I know its probably my prejudice but no one would take you seriously. (Male MG, Marketing)

Unfortunately part-time work still conjurs up images of Tesco checkouts and whilst senior people insist that their jobs cannot be done in fewer hours, the status of part-time work is unlikely to change. The lack of women in Cargo meant that the whole area of working mothers and family friendly policies had not been examined at all - it just wasn't an issue and the few women with children there managed - again, one had a very supportive HR male boss. The only senior manager there told me straight out that there was absolutely no way she could do her job if she had children. It was hard enough keeping a marriage together and that was only because her husband worked at home and was very understanding about the demands of her job.

The Cargo secret project, which I have outlined elsewhere (chapter on management style), was premised on the assumption that the key managers who were being brought in, rather ordered in, were available to give over their work lives exclusively to this project. Two of them were living abroad and had just been asked to fly over,

little knowing that they were going to be asked to stay for several months. Both these men had families but leaving them behind was not an issue that merited discussion. One man, who was a single parent, was mentioned by one of the senior managers in this secret meeting. "We mustn't forget that H has some babysitting responsibilities," This was greeted with embarrassment but all men present were aware enough of the airline's equal opportunity culture not to say anything disrespectful - also I was there. There followed some talk about putting effort in was all that mattered and then a joke about a creche in the project site, with some awkward laughter. He was unusual, in unusual circumstances and allowances may be made, but the rest of them would give over all the time the project needed.

RESULTS SERCO

The prevailing culture of the bank was still fairly paternalistic and the reality of working women had not yet dawned on some of the members.

Table 6 vix Marital status and children of Serco managers

	Married	Cohabiting	Children
Men	82% (18)	9% (2)	68% (14)
Women	67% (24)	13% (8)	40% (13)
			Sample size 58

Again a much higher percentage of men were married and had children than women. It was certainly more the norm that women left the company on childbirth than returned although there were no statistics of this kept.

Table 6 x Who takes main home responsibility- Serco management

Who takes Main Responsibility at Home ?		
	Men	Women
Me	14% (3)	58% (21)
My partner	46% (10)	6% (2)
Shared	51%(9)	36% (13)

Sample size 58

Table 6 xi Main home responsibility for Serco married respondents

Who takes Main Responsibility at home ?		
	Married men	Married women
Me	5% (1)	42% (10)
My partner	70%(11)	8% (2)
Shared	25 % (6)	50% (12)

Sample size 42

Again a majority of married women managers had sole responsibility for the home whereas only one man did .

Table 6 xii Accommodation of Home Life- Serco Divisional Breakdown

	Yes%	No%	
SSEC	50 (4)	50 (4)	
SIM	85 (27)	15 (5)	
ECFD	50 (4)	50 (4)	sample size 48

There was no significant difference between the sexes in the figures on accommodation of home life but there was a divisional difference. 85% of SIM

respondents thought that their organisation accommodated their home life, compared to the remainder of the bank where 50% thought so (average all departments 70%). This is important because SIM is the division where most of the potential and actual working mothers are. The managing director of SIM is a young working mother herself, no doubt a big influence. The SIM respondents felt the department was accommodating of their home life.

> People get to know each other pretty well and the team structure means that if you are having a problem your team carries your work for you. People do feel able to take compassionate leave for sickness or a bereavement. (Male Manager, SIM)

The MD's attitude seemed to promote an openness around family issues. On one of my first visits to the department I heard her discussing common children problems with one of the tea ladies in the Ladies loo. This may be a further example of the important influence on values that a leader has (Schein 1985).

Table 6 xiii Home work Conflict at Serco

Is there a Home Work Conflict ?

	Yes	No
Men	54 %(12)	46%(10)
Women	57%(20)	43%(15) 1 miss.
Married Men	55%(11)	45% (9)
Married Women	61%(14)	39%(10)
Men with children	53% (8)	47% (7)
Women with children	86%(12)	14% (2) 1miss.

Sample size 58

The above figures show that the real conflict between home and work for women comes with the arrival of children - 86% of women with children said there was a home/work conflict whereas for men it makes no difference at all.

There was a good deal of defensiveness around the issue of working mothers and home matters when I brought these issues up in interviews, particularly with men and women who did not have children. Firstly there was surprise, I was there to talk about work and the interviewees were much keener to describe their work than their private lives. The women with children were much harder to draw out on the subject than were women in the airline. I had a couple of very frank and quite emotional interviews which almost felt treacherous given we were sitting in the grandeur of seventh floor corporate finance main boardroom.

Men were quite happy to say how difficult it was for women with children but there was no thought as to whether it could or should be different. Some of the women without children clearly had not given the issue a thought and looked at me blankly as if to say, how could there be a problem. It certainly was not considered an organisational issue, although my research had been commissioned by a woman in the personnel department because of worries about a few very senior women who had recently left the bank because they could not combine their family lives with their work. It was an individual's problem.

Table 6 xiv Attitudes to working mothers - Serco women respondents

	Positive	Neutral	Negative
Your attitude	64%(23)	28%(10)	8%(3)
Department's attitude	27%(9)	60%(20)	12%(5)2miss
Organisation's attitude	20%(7)	62%(21)	20%(7)1miss
			sample size 36

Table 6 xv Attitudes to working mothers - Serco male respondents

	Positive	Neutral	Negative
Your attitude	36%(8)	50%(11)	14%(3)
Department's attitude	18%(4)	77%(17)	5%(1)
Organisation's attitude	24%(5)	72%(15)	15%(2)1miss.
			sample size 22

The men showed much less positive attitude (36%) to working mothers than did the women (64%), and opted for more neutral responses. This ties in with the general lack of acknowledgement of any issues around women and work and shows either a total lack of thought or denial of more negative feelings. The biggest discrepancy here was the attitudes of the men at the bank compared to the men at the airline, where male attitudes were much more positive.

The issue of working mothers in the bank is still a relatively new one. All the women I spoke to had very small children and two were the only ones in their department to have returned after maternity leave. Maternity leave was the statutory

minimum, which several women found mean considering the huge profitability of the bank. Maternity leave was still considered a nuisance by others in the organisation.

> Women taking time off for maternity leave can cause administrative problems, It is a nuisance, it means that someone else has to cover her work for her. Luckily we are a big department so their work can be shared out without too much grumbling. Of course you are pleased for them personally but it is a bind. (Female Director SIM)

Some of the women I spoke to felt under pressure to return for both financial and career reasons, so minimising the inconvenience of their absence. I showed in an earlier chapter how this discourse of maternity, and its unavoidable inconvenience, can run concurrently with the discourse of equal opportunities without the contradictions being apparent. The following conversation with a senior male director of ECFD illustrates this contradiction. Firstly he said that they employed a lot of women (which they didn't) and professed to have nothing against women in ECFD.

> We are aware of people's family obligations but they have to realise that the client always comes first. (Male Director ECFD)
>
> Me: That's asking a lot of any mother
>
> Yes, it is, but then it's a *voluntary* thing. If she wants the same bonus as the others, she must do the same work.(Male Director ECFD)

This attitude of maternity inconveniencing life at work was far more emphasised here than in the airline and the need to keep that side of life separate from the office the greater. The most senior woman in corporate finance said

> I was back in my office for meetings three days after the birth of last child. I regret that. I felt I had to come back for my clients and it was a stupid decision to have made.I blame myself, no one asked me to, I should have said to hell with my clients, I've had a baby, but I didn't. (Female Director, ECFD)

When I asked whether the bank would have minded if she had taken three or four months off, she replied

> Debatable. I think they probably would have minded but we never got that far. It is my clients who are the key, all I thought about was that they did not suffer in any way. (Female director, ECFD)

This woman had five children and was constantly being held up as a role model. She appreciated that it was a tough environment for a women, but by engineering her work such that she won good clients and delivered consistently to them, she bypassed much of the potential criticism about leaving early or lacking commitment. She accepted that she received no particular support from her male colleagues.

> I operate as a one man show. It doesn't mean that I can't have good working relationships with some of them but I don't ask for anything. Special favours? Oh God you are dead in the water if you do that. (Female Director, ECFD)

This attitude made it very hard for other women in the department.

> She's not doing us any favours, behaving like that, and then being held up as role model. (Female Manager, ECFD)

This last manager was the only other female manager in the division who had a child. She was very stressed and upset by not seeing him very much, although she loved her work. A male director in ECFD told me that people were open about their family life in the department, but the women I spoke to there said differently.

> People do not talk about their families here. One man's wife was about to give birth and we didn't know that she was even pregnant The bank itself doesn't encourage a family friendly atmosphere. It is rare to bring a partner along to drinks after work for instance, it would be considered odd.We are very insular. A dinner at senior director level, yes, wives would go along but nothing else. (Female Manager, ECFD)

The ECFD 'role model' contrasts strongly with the other role model in the bank, the managing director of SIM UK who said

> I took full maternity leave, and cut off from work completely. I did feel the first time, that if I didn't come back, there would be all the men saying, 'I knew she wouldn' t come back', so in a way I had something to prove . This was before I was promoted to head of the department. The second time, I had already been offered promotion, and I thought it 's something I have to do, but I still took off my full entitlement. There is always the worry though, that they've managed without you for seven months - do they really need you? (Female Director, SIM)

One woman said

> Oh with a first baby they're on the look out for lack of commitment, or emotional instability or other things they think they can expect.(Female Manager, SIM)

The securities division, SSEC, was also a tough environment for women who wanted to combine work and family life. One woman had just arrived in a senior role and had two small children. Her influence was yet to be felt. There was only one woman who had gone through maternity leave and was back working in SSEC. She said that, once she found she was pregnant, no one thought that she would continue her career.

> I took four months off after the birth although I was entitled to twenty nine weeks. I felt though that my four months was too much absence for them. I had told everyone that I was coming back but I don't think they realised it because they were all shocked when they saw me. I was annoyed because when clients and people in the department asked whether I was coming back, they just said they didn't know. (Female Manager, SSEC)

When she told them she was pregnant she was told the following day that another analyst would have to be employed. As it turned out they had difficulty hiring

someone and he only started work one month before her return. When he - the new analyst - asked whether she was coming back, they said they didn't know, despite the fact that she had confirmed to them that she was. It is very difficult now because they are covering the same markets and two analysts are not really required. It was causing her some anxiety because she felt she was being pushed out.

If a woman feels unable to cope with family and work, particularly the long hours, it is viewed as an unfortunate but inevitable consequence of employing women. Her performance and attendance at work is measured against a man's and, if she falls short, she must go. There is no consideration that the organisation ought to accommodate a valuable and loyal employee in whom the bank has invested a lot over the years. It is seen as a personal problem not an organisational problem.

Prospective motherhood

Domestic location and biological reproductive capacity are reference points that are constantly drawn upon to restrict or throw doubts on women's ability to be organisationally effective (Mills 1989). Some of the younger women felt that the men were just waiting for them to marry, have children and leave. It was almost as though that would remove the competition .

> I'm in an interesting situation right now because I got married six months ago and I'm nearly thirty seven. There are lots of comments about having a family. I say "No we are not planning a family yet" and they reply, "Oh you must be" or they say "Oh you'd make a lovely mum." (Female Manager, SSEC)

This woman was irritated by the fact that her marriage and decision to have a family had become such a focus for her colleagues. For men marriage meant settling down

and was taken as a positive move for their careers. For women it signified potential disruption and had a destabilising effect. Impending marriage and motherhood often sound the death knell for their career prospects. A sad situation may develop where the young fathers have their desks scattered with photographs of their wives and children and they take their duties, like sports day, very seriously and can proudly announce this commitment in the office whereas young mothers may have to pretend the gas man is coming when in reality a child is sick at home. One mother I spoke to went to all her children's school events, however small they were and she lied in the office, telling people that she was going to a meeting or whatever. References to women's sexuality may be one way to detract from the seriousness of her intent and, in a similar way, reference to her reproductive capacity is another and a far more acceptable one.

Conclusion on Serco

The bank had little experience of accommodating working mothers and certainly there had been no challenges to the prevailing assumptions about home and work. The wealth of the majority of the senior women with children made it easier for them to buy in household management and childcare services, thereby appearing at work unburdened by the responsibility.

The organisation of home care was a second job and one that went totally unnoticed by the organisation. 'Nanny problems' is in many organisations akin to 'sick child',requiring a small amount of time off, yet in the bank this would not be a legitimate excuse. One young mother talked of how hard it was to find a nanny to work a minumum of twelve hours a day. There was nothing to accommodate new mothers although one woman was coming back from maternity leave in SIM to

work four days a week - this was viewed with some trepidation. There simply were not enough working mothers for any shift in attitudes to occur.

CONCLUSION

Work invaded home boundaries all the time, but in different ways. In corporate finance in the bank and in the finance division of the airline home life was put on hold for weeks at a time. In the bank people cancelled not just dinner parties but holidays if an important deal came up and in the airline, at budget time, finance managers rarely got home. Home was not a consideration let alone a priority. In the bank only corporate finance people would come in at weekends for a special deal, whereas in the airline it was a usual occurrence for people to work weekends. In the airline people had e- mail at home and took work home more than in the bank.

In some divisions of the organisations the culture considered home affairs brought into the workplace to be unprofessional and required them to be kept separate from the office. This kind of culture excludes the private from the public world of work, as if in some way it may pollute, or render less serious the happenings at work. The following story may illustrate the ways in which private matters are associated with women and (perhaps both) considered out of place in the private world of work.

The only female fund manager in an investment bank was not at her desk for the morning meeting and someone asked where she was. One man shouted across the room in a derisory voice, "She's doing something at home, waiting for her new kitchen or something!" This was met by some raised eyebrows and a kind of

mocking laughter. Waiting for a new kitchen wasn't the kind of thing a fund manager did, not a male one anyway.

It is often this kind of dominant culture which excludes emotional matters, also often regarded as belonging to the private realm. It was particularly pernicious in the corporate finance and securities divisions of the bank, the finance and cargo divisions of the airline, and at all very senior levels of all divisions. The more senior you are the more important work is over anything else.

The image of woman as mother and the prospect of motherhood was a negative influence on women's progress in the bank, although there was also some evidence of this in the airline, particularly in Cargo and Finance, illustrating Roper's point that men use ideologies promoting marriage and motherhood to minimise competition from women.

There was a difference in the reproductive discourses in the bank culture and the airline culture. In the airline it was assumed that women would return to work, perhaps forfeiting a promotion and slowing down a bit, whereas in the bank the assumption was that women would be more likely to leave when they had babies than stay. This assumption meant that women who returned to work were considered 'unusual'.

Successful women in both organisations kept their home lives separate from work and managed their families as best they could. When you consider that the prevailing ethos in some areas of both organisations was to put work above families, this was a very difficult burden for women to carry. They all used nannies to care for their children and had other elaborate plans in case nanny was sick. None of the women

took time off when their children were ill, or as one woman said, "if it were really serious, like they were in hospital, obviously I'd be there immediately, but tonsillitis and the like, no, I can't."

Managing the nanny was given high priority because everything depended on that relationship which was the mother's responsibility. However, mothers did want to spend more time with their children - more than they were able to and in this sense I found no collaborative evidence to support Hochschild's findings that women did not want to shorten their hours because they derived more satisfaction at work than at home. My findings did concur with Hochschild's in that the women worried about the lack of status of part time work. If they could have retained their status (not even necessarily their money) and their own job many of the women would like to have worked a shorter week. But some of them did not want to cut back if it meant stepping down a few rungs of the career ladder and perhaps doing a less interesting and important job, or being seen to be uncommitted. In the bank and in parts of the airline this was a hypothetical point anyway.

The assumption that work is what happens in the office and private life is managed somehow, without effort, pervades most working cultures today. What constitutes work and who does it are often accepted cultural values which are embedded in society and organisational life. In the past male workers could arrive for work, without the burden of worrying about the organisation of domestic matters and children. Most of them still do today. As part of an organisation's culture, the public/private divide can perpetuate the reality of the dual burden for women and continue to act as a rationale which makes it more fitting that men dominate senior organisational life. In this way this aspect of organisational culture is exclusionary to women.

CHAPTER SEVEN

INFORMAL SOCIALISING

INTRODUCTION

The informal life of an organisation is often taken for being the sum total of organisational culture. My definition of culture is much broader than that, but informal networking and socialising is an important constituent of an organisation's culture. In this chapter I examine the reasons for informal networking and socialising and the ways in which it may exclude women. For the purposes of operationalisation I broke down aspects of informal life into the following - networking, mentoring, socialising after hours, both corporate and with colleagues, and sport, and examine some of the literature on these. I then lay out my own data and discuss the findings. I include in the after hours socialising some forms of sexual entertainment, which are part and parcel of male business life. I wanted to gauge the ways in which managers may use informal channels to further their careers and to see how important this form of networking was within the organisation or industry. I examine the potentially exclusionary aspects of this informal side of work life.

BACKGROUND

Informal networks

Informal networks and their exclusionary power are an important area when studying an organisation's culture and its impact on women (Tomlinson, Brockbank and Traves 1997; Marshall 1984, 1990; Rigg and Sparrow 1994; Cockburn 1991). In her study of women managers, Trudy Coe found that the greatest barrier to women in management was the existence of a 'men's club'.

> The old boy's network is viewed as the major obstacle at every level of management. (Coe 1992 p.22)

In their research on women retail managers, Tomlinson, Brockbank and Traves (1997) found that the interviewees

> highlighted the significant, subjective and political processes. They (women managers) stressed the need to engage in 'political manoeuvres and game playing. (Tomlinson, Brockbank and Traves p.216)

The authors said that, despite their equal numbers at entry points, women remained poorly represented at senior levels, suggesting that subjective and informal processes were important determinants of women and men's progress (Tomlinson, Brockbank and Traves 1997 p.218).

The formal structures of authority, described by Weber, have long been recognised as an incomplete picture of power in organisations since they were not able to

> reveal the cross weaving of the structure by less formal relations of power, the values and patterns of behaviour which are independent of these formal rules and which develop out of the interaction of persons in groups in the organisations.(Clegg and Dunkerley 1980 p.132)

It is now widely acknowledged that informal rules, which supplement and may even undermine official rules, are an important part of organisational life (Peters and Waterman 1982; Deal and Kennedy 1982; Jackall 1988; Scase and Goffee 1989).

Whilst some men may find informal activities difficult, particularly if they are from a different culture, or for example are teetotal in an environment where after hours

drinking was an important 'work' activity, the informal side of organisational life is far more problematic for women. Failure to be included in the informal networks of an organisation means exclusion from a wealth of potential business information and client contact, and can have severe consequences on career progression as well as isolation and personal distress.

Exclusion from the informal side of work, then, may mean being left in the dark about imminent promotions, not being given frank performance appraisals, not understanding the significance of particular meetings. More importantly, friendships are forged through the informal network, often crossing barriers of official seniority. Whatever the formal rules of bureaucracy, in business it is friends and contacts that give you the final edge. The importance of informal rules is particularly relevant when it comes to promotion and selection. As soon as people reach general management, companies start looking for someone who can oil the wheels, who can bring in other business and contacts, someone who will socialise with the right people, who is pleasant to go drinking with. It is not hard to see why men may score higher here than women. Often the importance of informal life at work is often not really felt until a person reaches a senior position. A senior person will be a representative of the organisation, reflecting its character. Collinson, Knights and Collinson (1990) discovered the importance of informal relationships in their research on discrimination in recruitment. The high degree of informality in the use of selection channels and criteria was supplemented in several insurance companies by the use of job interviews conducted in the pub.

> The idea is to see how you shaped up informally, in a social situation, to see how you handle yourself over a couple of drinks and an informal chat. If you can operate on a sporting level and have a good chat ..that's the sort of thing they're looking for, Recent Recruit (Collinson, Knights and Collinson 1990 p.144)

Informal exclusion is powerful and hard for women to complain about because each example sounds trivial but, added up, the whole picture is one of most women being excluded from a primary organisation communication system.

> When entertainment of business customers took place I was never invited. Looking back, I can see how many things I was excluded from - the golf days, the dinner parties, the after-work socialising, clay pigeon shooting. Hilary Williams, ex-director of British Gas after successfully suing them for sex discrimination.[1]

Lorber (1989) sees women's exclusion by men from these informal networks as being from lack of trust, due to the fact that men and women are brought up in different cultural worlds. Other management writers have attributed the informal network as functioning to reduce uncertainty within the organisation (Schein 1992; Kanter1977b; Marshall 1984). Kanter argued that the uncertainty of management resulted in the need for informal processes to secure 'trusted' people.

> It is the uncertainty quotient in managerial work, as it has come to be defined in the large modern corporation, that causes management to become so socially restricting: to develop tight inner circles excluding social strangers; to keep control in the hands of socially homogeneous peers; to stress conformity and insist upon a diffuse, unbounded loyalty; and to prefer ease of communication and thus social certainty over the strains of dealing with people who are "different". (Kanter 1977b p.49)

Kanter says that women are excluded because they are 'tokens' i.e. outside the dominating group, not because they are women, and says it would be the same for any token group. It was their rarity and scarcity rather than their femaleness. She captures the exclusionary tactics of these dominants in her study.

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[1] Taken from an interview with Sarah Rutherford in *Towards Equality*, April 1994

> In some cases dominants did not wish to have tokens around all the time. They had secrets - they moved the locus of some activities and expressions from public settings to which tokens had access to more private settings from which they could be excluded. (Kanter 1977b p.225)

Marshall has agreed with this.

> Within the informal network shorthand signs of suitability develop to supplement official but difficult to assess criteria of performance and trustworthiness. (Marshall 1984 p.94)

Kanter noted that many of the women were not included in the networks by which informal socialisation occurred and politics behind the formal system were exposed (Kanter1977b). She explained her findings with the concept of numerical (proportional) gender imbalance. She defines tokens as a subgroup composing less than 15% of the whole group. In her theory an increase in numbers of tokens would reduce the negative effects (1977a). It has since been argued that Kanter's emphasis on number balancing as a social change strategy failed to anticipate backlash from dominants. In attributing negative consequences to token members to tokenism, Kanter diverted attention from their root cause, sexism (Yoder 1991), and its manifestation in higher status men's attempts to preserve their advantage in the workplace (Reskin and Roos 1990).

Kanter 's explanation ignores the wider social fact that men have always had access to male only establishments and have fought hard to preserve them, displaying a desire to exclude women from many areas of their life e.g. the Garrick Club is but one of many, many dining clubs which still excludes women members. Their importance as meeting places for men may be declining but they are testimony to the existence of something other than mere fear of uncertainty which leads men to

exclude women. Pubs have always been the preserve of men, serving as public meeting places for a many different groups of men.

Corporate Entertainment

Corporate entertaining may be an important part of some managers' work life. This may involve lunches, dinners, or going to the theatre or opera. Attending sports events is a very big part of corporate entertaining and is discussed below. Corporate entertaining is about forging closer relationships with clients to facilitate a better business relationship. It may be quite formal, like a dinner with partners, or it may be a pint in a pub after work with a special client. I asked specifically about this type of socialising, its importance and tried to see whether there was a gender difference in both activity and perception of its importance.

I think that looking at how and why men exclude women in wider social settings gives us more insight into what happens informally within organisations. Male bonding, which often involves specifically excluding women and sadly often denigrating them, occurs both within and outside organisations. I asked about the significance of the old boy network in my research, and asked if it was a barrier to progress. I wanted to ascertain how important political networking was for people's careers and specifically asked about this in the questionnaire. Marshall (1984) contended, from her research, that women did not value political networking as much as men, and I test this against my own findings, to see whether women's ambivalence towards it may act against their career interests.

Mentoring

One aspect of the informal culture is sponsorship/mentoring. Sponsors provide introductions through which an individual becomes established in their profession (Epstein 1989; Lorber 1989), and socialise their proteges to the values and behaviour that are appropriate to the work culture.

> Boy wonders rise under certain power structures. They're recognised by a powerful person because they are very much like him. He sees himself, a younger version in that person. Who can look at a woman and see themselves? (Kanter 1977b p.184)

Men may hesitate to take on women proteges for fear of adverse reactions from their wives and colleagues (Epstein 1989). In some industries men may indeed 'champion' a woman. Janet Street Porter (Duggary 1994) has a number of male sponsors in the television world on whom she has depended heavily for support. I asked about the importance of mentoring in both organisations, both in the interviews and the questionnaires, and tried to ascertain whether there was a gendered impact in either.

After hours socialising

Women's exclusion from informal networks in which information is shared and alliances develop has implications for their learning and performing their jobs and their chances for advancement. They may be particularly excluded from activities that occur outside work hours (Kanter 1977b; Epstein 1989). Men have traditionally socialised together through drinking in pubs and bars and it is only recently that women are able to go out without men to drink in the evenings, and even then there

are some places where they would be deemed to be 'on the pick up'. It still is not acceptable for a woman alone to go out for a drink in a pub or bar without causing a raised eyebrow. Deal and Kennedy say that

> the exclusion of women and minorities from the rich and supportive life of an organisation's culture begins the day they walk in the door. Most don't even know its happening to them at the time. (1982 p.67)

and then note, without further comment, that the primary exclusion of women was from after work socialising.

Alongside organisational experiences at work, there are a vast array of clubs, pubs and other organised activities which help to promote and sustain certain images of masculinity. From pubs and bars for working men, through service clubs such as Rotary, Kinsemen and Lions for professional men, to Men's Clubs like Boodles and Whites for the rich and powerful, a variety of organised activities and venues offer males the opportunity to escape family responsibilities, to share and develop male camaraderie, and to develop important work-related networks (Rogers 1988).

As one woman said, "There will only be equality in the City when the pubs have as many women in them as men in the evenings." Knights and Morgan's study of an insurance company showed the construction of a male culture "around the job" which included socialising after work. There was, the authors noted

> No formal bar to women selling, but the way the culture developed, the expectations of the work, what the tasks involved, the social networks through which support was mobilised all ensured that women were unlikely to be employed except in isolated cases. (Knights and Morgan 1990 p.199)

Women in Cynthia Cockburn 's study of male resistance to equal opportunities told her that their absence from all male gatherings after work impeded their progress, cutting them out from important sources of information. One man said "We have a phrase You'll learn more in the pub than you will in the store." (Cockburn 1991 p.153).

Pubs matter, too, in terms of more regular kinds of activity: office gossip, what promotions are going, buying a useful colleague or boss a drink, deciding what we all think about so and so, or finding out useful bits of information about the job when it's very competitive and there is no formal training (Rogers 1988). They are important because, until recently, they were the only public meeting places totally dominated by men. The growth in wine bars during the eighties, however, has made it easier for the inclusion of women in drinking after work. Making inroads into men's public domain has not been without resistance - remember the Fleet Street wine bar, El Vino's fight to keep women away from the bar and to this day they will not serve women who are wearing trousers. Attempting to fit into the after hours socialising can be an uncomfortable experience for women and impossible if she is carrying the domestic responsibilities of a family. Either they attempt to join in this after work or lunch time socialising, matching the men drink for drink and thereby inviting criticism at their unfeminine behaviour or they leave men to it, and miss out on vital business information.

After hours drinking is not necessarily part of the mens' club as there are now many places where mixed groups of men and women go after work to socialise together. Obviously, women with families are less likely to take part in after hours drinking and certain venues are more likely to be frequented by men only. In my research, I wanted to see if after hours socialising, with clients or colleagues, was an integral

part of organisational life and, if it was, was it important? What kind of after hours activities took place and did they include both men and women? Could I find any evidence that women were left out to their detriment?

Sport

Sport is an integral part of business life. The senior men of the City were likely to have been in the boathouse together at Oxford or Cambridge and sporting ability has always been rated highly as a positive characteristic for recruitment. Being an excellent sportsman, particularly at national level, is often enough to get you a job. Certain industries are associated with particular sports e.g. Chartered Surveying has always attracted a lot of rugby players. Businesses know that, through sport, they can reach an enormous audience and there is huge competition to sponsor many of the events. Some examples are Robert Fleming sponsoring the Rugby World Cup in South Africa, Green Flag, the England football team and Tetley the England cricket team.

Sport also acts as a bonding mechanism for men. Many men have learned to communicate through sport and men who have recently met often talk about sport as a bridge of conversation.

> It's an icebreaker and anyone can join in, no matter what education or class they're from. (Male MG, Airco)

This may sound trite but its importance should not be underestimated. A sound knowledge of football, rugby or cricket or preferably all three can be vital for forming relationships in business. Boys learn these from an early age and often their

relationships are formed around a shared love of a sport. The prolific use of sports metaphors in business language e.g. 'playing a fast ball', 'under starters orders', shows how much sport pervades the business workplace.

Rogers views sport as a kind of shared fantasy (1988). Although some men do it, the real point of sport for men in groups is watching it and talking about it. As Korda (1973) observed, most men are more concerned with knowing and reading about sport than doing it, and it is a woman's ignorance of sport that attracts their ridicule, rather than her inability to play. The male identification with sport has its effects in the confining of women, their sense of being limited.

Much business has traditionally been conducted on golf courses and it is often for business reasons, as well as social, that people want to join prestigious golf clubs. Although this game is enjoyed by many women, the length of one game makes it prohibitive for women who have family commitments.

> We talk business when we are playing golf. Golf is about establishing close personal relationships (businessman quoted in Abdela 1994)

The importance of sport as an integral part of selling is confirmed by Collinson et al's study on recruitment.

> The biggest thing is the sport actually. I play cricket and football. There's a broker in town, who I've played football with for years so I now do business with him. At our sports club it's all solicitors and accountants, all the sorts of contacts you need ....you see it's a lot easier to 'do things' on a Saturday, after the match, over a few pints in an informal situation. (Collinson , Knights and Collinson 1994 p.145).

Men join shoots, and attend football, cricket and rugby matches, to make business contacts.

Corporate entertaining through sports

The enormous growth in corporate entertaining and the corporate takeover of events like Wimbledon, Henley Regatta, and international Rugby is evidence of the close relationship between sports and businesses. Attending sports events is a big part of corporate entertaining. Some of these events are just as accessible to women, like race meetings at Epsom or Cheltenham, or going to Wimbledon tennis, or attending Henley Regatta. However, there are not so many women rushing for tickets to test matches, rugby internationals and football matches and, more importantly, not many would be asked. Someone said to me that the more elite the sporting activity, either watching or participating, the less likely women would be there. High on the elite stakes would be a day's shooting or a day's fishing.

In my research I wanted to find out how important sport was in the working lives of my respondents and whether it was used as a bonding mechanism for men, and whether women felt excluded by it. Sport's apparently neutral characteristics makes it appear a harmless interest for men. Its exclusion of women is rarely commented on, instead being taken as the natural order of things. Only incidents like the recent exposure of the misogynistic conversation and behaviour of Newcastle United directors Freddie Sheppard and John Hall serve to remind us of some of the more unpleasant effects of 'harmless' sport like football. A recent paper[2] at the BSA conference discussed the links between the success of a local football team and the

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[2]Balls, the Body and Violence Against Women , paper presented at BSA Conference , April 1998 , by Jill Radford and Eve Hudson.

increased incidents of domestic violence in the area - another unpalatable connection. The high numbers of footballers, themselves, who have committed violence against women e.g. Paul Gasgoigne, Lee Chapman and Stan Collymore, and the recent outpouring of racial hatred by hooligans in Marseilles in the World Cup 1998, is further evidence of football's harnessing of some harmful characteristics of masculinity. Some of these exclusionary aspects of sport need to be held in mind when discussing the role of sport, whether playing it, watching it or talking about it in organisational life.

METHODS

My data is broken down into a similar format to the previous section, which was done to help in the operationalisation of the concept - networking and mentoring, after hours socialising, which includes corporate entertaining and sport, are the three main sections for each case study. The questionnaires provided much of the data for this chapter, there were specific questions on each area of informal socialising and interviews with the women. The men were reluctant to discuss this area and tended to deny either its existence or its importance. This may be because of lack of awareness of what informal socialising is and its specific meanings, particularly in the City where it is very much part of everyday life. Lastly, I include sexual entertainment because, although I did not gain much in the way of data, I know it is a part of male business life and it should not be ignored.

I wanted to find out how important informal socialising of all kinds was - was there a gender difference? Was there any evidence to support the contention that informal socialising excluded women? How much a part of corporate life did sport play and did women find this aspect of informal life exclusionary?

RESULTS AIRCO

Informal Networking

The airline was constructed as if it was like a large family and, as such, it was important for employees to fit in. Its size and the many different elements of business within it meant that recruits came from a wide spectrum of society, although the low numbers of Asian and black people entering management was a cause for concern. Yet one senior director said that he always recognised an airline employee - "they are a type", he said and then went on to describe in vague terms what he thought they were - not very stylish yet very confident. I quickly saw what he meant and came to recognise the 'type' without being able to describe it very accurately myself. People moved around the airline quickly, both vertically and horizontally, into different areas so knowledge of what was going on in other parts of the airline and having contacts was crucial to career progress. When a job becomes vacant, it is advertised internally but very often a name would be suggested so both personal contact and reputation were important. Airline staff stay a long time and the need to build up contacts within the organisation is more important than making contacts outside.

Whilst being a very friendly place in which to work, there is a distinct feeling of a lot of behind the scenes planning and manoeuvring, with some people being in the know and others not. It is a very political place. Who you knew and who you knew well was important for your career development. This is hard to avoid in large, bureaucratic organisations where the need to be visible and to be acknowledged is all the more important but it also feeds resentment from employees who lack these networking skills and leads to fears that hard work alone is not sufficient to succeed.

In the section on management style, it was observed by many that women were not as interested in politics as men.

> Airco is very political - merit is not sufficient, more sometimes primary in succeeding, and women need to be able to infiltrate and be very political themselves. (Male MG, Finance)

> It is a very political place. It is a very difficult company to join from the outside because there is such an entrenched network. (Female SM, Marketing)

Doing a good job does not necessarily mean getting credit and what counts in a career is getting credit for doing good work (Hochschild 1975). The importance of getting on with people and relationships with senior staff was deemed the most rewarded attribute in the workplace.

Table 7 i Which work attribute is most rewarded in Airco ?

Work attribute	Respondents
Good relationship with senior person and politically aware risk taking.	41% (39)
Commitment and loyalty to the organisation.	1% (1)
Being part of a hard working team, committed to getting work done.	35% (33)
Individual performance and commitment and development of individual talent.	24% (23)

sample size 97 1 miss.

This network is built up over the years, from coming in as a graduate trainee with a group of others who all get to know each other well. This group spreads throughout the organisation over the years and becomes an important source of contacts.

One reaction, in the face of exclusion from male networks, is for women is to forge their own networks (O'Leary and Mitchell 1990). There seemed to be a problem in the airline with women helping other women on their way up the career ladder. There was general agreement among interviewees that to succeed, women had to adopt a male stance and beat them at their own game.

> I think that what you find is that women at senior levels tend to demonstrate fairly macho images which makes them more acceptable and this makes them unwilling to be seen 'helping' out other women or they feel genuinely that they don't need help. There is often a reluctance among senior women in a male environment to be attached in any way to a 'feminist' cause. (Female SM, Cabin Services)

I certainly heard mention of an old girls' network but the most successful women in the company also had extremely close alliances with the chief executive. Senior professional women have commented to me, on occasion, that there is little point in having a women's network when it is the men who can help you get on. My findings correspond with those of Marshall who suggests that women do not value the informal network as highly as do men or place such a high priority on membership (Marshall 1984).

> Networking is very important but women don't put that high on their list. (Female SM, Cabin Services)

Lack of inclination and lack of time prevent women from networking.

> I know I should be having lunch with people and generally networking but I just don't have the time. (Female SM, Marketing)
>
> I'm just not interested in office politics. (Female MG, Finance)

A point of interest is that the high numbers of women in Human Resources did not prevent it from being a very political department. The only senior woman manager in Cargo, however, did not feel excluded from any political intriguing or informal socialising, saying that, as she was the only woman she hardly posed a threat and they accepted her for herself. She thought it would be less easy as and when more women joined senior management and that then the men may be more excluding.

So women were less political in my study and this could have a negative effect on their careers, given the importance of political networking in this organisation.

Mentoring

> There is an affinity between men around mentoring - they feel comfortable. Perhaps they recognise themselves in others and want to do well. So it reinforces the old image. (Female SM, Finance)

There is official mentoring of the airline graduate intake every year, but its importance was mentioned to me as happening unofficially. It is directly linked in with the informal networking and the bonds that men may form together to the unconscious exclusion of women.

> Mentoring is part of the process through which gender hierarchies in management are reproduced. It exploits the particular emotional complexion of relations between men, rather than being simply an important training and development tool. (Roper 1994 p.102)

The formal mentoring system was praised but, as one senior manager said, ultimately it does depend on personalities, whether you get on with each other or not, as to how much time you spend with that person and matching personalities cannot be done formally.

Alison Halford cites freemasonry as a means by which relationships within the police force were forged (1994). As a secret society it is hard for men to investigate, let alone women who are not allowed to be masons. The influence of masons is acknowledged but the extent to which it helps on matters of recruitment and promotion is impossible to measure. I heard several whispers - from women - of a high incidence of freemasonry in the airline, particularly in the Cargo division where there are historical links between the cargo industry and freemasonry.

<u>After hours socialising</u>

There was not much importance placed on outside socialising after hours. Partly the hours were so long anyway there was little time but also there were not many pubs or wine bars in the area where people could go after work. People do meet up for drinks, usually for a special occasion and this is planned in advance and involves driving out somewhere. Eighty seven per cent of respondents did mix with colleagues informally and 38% thought it was important to do so but there were no significant gender differences. Higher up the organisation socialising is more formal involving dinner parties and partners. Interestingly I heard more about that from a female manager who was also an airline wife, married to a senior director. She felt that she had two jobs, her own and that of being a wife as there are quite a few functions and dinners to attend. She had also given up work for two years when her husband had been posted abroad. Membership of clubs (declared) was almost

entirely restricted to sports clubs, and networking was restricted to the airline as opposed to within the industry.

Corporate entertaining was restricted, really, to top management, who may be guests at sports events and the opera etc from the company's bank or broker. The airline is usually on the receiving end of client entertaining e.g. the marketing management would be entertained by contacts in the advertising world.

> I go out about one evening a week in town, usually a dinner. (Female SM, Marketing)

In Cargo, it was common practice for the sales team to take their customers out for drinks and management to take the customers' management out for the occasional dinner.

Fifty four per cent of Airco respondents did mix socially with clients, both internal and external, but only 13% felt this was very important, and a further 31% thought it important, while 34% thought it unimportant. Again, there were no significant gender differences. Socialising only became important at senior levels.

Sexual entertainment

With such a high profile on equal opportunities it was unlikely that I would hear stories of overt sexual entertainment but I was told of the story when an international meeting for world regional heads was taking place as it did every two years. The conference was for the UK heads to meet their world counterparts and yet the two women in the UK who were regional heads were not invited. Further

investigation discovered that the location of the conference was the reason for their exclusion - it was in Bangkok and it was felt that they might be embarrassed if they had been invited.

Sport

There was evidence of the use of sport as a way in which men formed relationships.

> The airline is very political and to succeed on merit is not sufficient or on some occasions primary in succeeding in gaining promotion. Since a lot of the politics is linked to male sports, bonhomie type of environment a woman has to be very politically astute and able to make as rapid advancement as a contemporary male. (Female MG, Cabin Services)

The airline had their own sports clubs and teams in which some of the young men I interviewed took part. Conversations around sport are used as a communicating mechanism for men which women rarely share. Discussing Saturday's Big Match on a Monday morning is not usually how two women bond at work. This may not matter if numbers of men and women are equal but the women who particularly disliked it were those who were, perhaps, working alone with a group of men. Whilst not being ostensibly offensive to women, conversations centred on male sports exclude women from participation. As one woman said, 'You are just left standing there, feeling stupid'. As the numbers of women football fans grow it will be interesting to see whether the younger generation do have more mixed gender discussions of sport. Golf and soccer were popular among the men and the airline had many sports clubs within the organisation. Golf, particularly, was a feature of senior managers life.

> It still appears a boy's club with younger men being more readily accepted into the network of more successful older men by a shared interest of sport -

> football, golf etc. and therefore they are nurtured and chosen for promotion. (Female SM, Cargo)
>
> Oh yes, there are still golf days that women don't get invited to. (Female SM Marketing)

We can see here the acceptance of sport as being the preserve of men and that women may underestimate its importance for bonding.

RESULTS SERCO

Informal Life

Informal socialising and networking has been a part of City life since its beginnings. Business was transacted in coffee bars, with not a lawyer in sight, so trust and certainty of a person's integrity was vital. Introductions were made between friends and very often a business deal was born. The old Stock Exchange motto 'Dictum Meum Pactum', or 'My word is my bond', underlines the role that trust played in the transactions of the City.

In this sense the informal processes were a vehicle for reducing uncertainty in the way that Kanter (1977b) describes. Although the world of finance is a very different place now, the emphasis on informal meetings and building up relationships remains an important part of City life. City socialising is mostly about making a client feel special, offering him or her something that the next company cannot match or, in the end, making them a friend, so that loyalty and business ensue. Business and leisure often intermingle in the City. All manner of entertainments and treats are at a brokers' or bankers' disposal, to woo a potential client or reward a generous client. Whilst corporate entertaining is the formal agenda in reality many clients become

friends and attend private dinner parties and parties. I have met many who make each other godparents to their children.

> I'm just about to go skiing with a bunch of clients who I've got very friendly with over the years. (Female, Manager SSEC)

Political networking

Some City organisations have a reputation for being more political than others e.g. the American banks, and my case study is not particularly political, perhaps because of its low staff turnover and reputation for treating employees fairly. Only 15% replied that a good relationship with a senior person and politically aware risk taking was the work attribute most rewarded, compared to the 64% who said that being part of a hard working team was the work attribute most rewarded. To some extent this sentiment reflects the type of work done in the bank. For most managers and above, their performance speaks for itself - their funds either do well or not, their commission takes are high or low, they have completed successful deals or not, so the need to attract attention to oneself is less pressing than, say, in the airline. Inevitably relationships do matter, and I was told that the organisation becomes more political the more senior you become. If you are aiming high, you want to make sure you have enough support around you and years may be spent ensuring loyalty in certain people, to build up a power base.

> Networking is very important but I don't do enough. I find it hard to do it with a load of blokes, and in a way they don't expect us (women) to do it. (Female Asst. Director, ECFD)

This echoes Lorber's (1989) statement that very often the rising stars are in a pool of their own, separated from women. Only 15% of respondents cited the old boy

network as a barrier to their career, which I found surprisingly low. Many of the women I interviewed showed blatant naivity, denying that there even was such a thing. Perhaps this was for my benefit but my own experience in the City had shown me otherwise. Networking is for career furtherance. Other informal socialising may be to bond colleagues so that they work better together, or to reward employees for good work, or to reward clients for giving business or curry favours so that they give you more business.

In a discussion on promotion one female assistant director commented that managers needed to network, and that thinking that it was enough to be good at your job was a 'very female perception'. However she found it hard to know how to network

> Good question, I'm still trying to work that out. It's very subtle. For example you get championed in this organisation. It just doesn't happen. Men choose in their own likeness.(Asst. director ECFD)

I did not uncover much in the way of women networking, although several formal networks have been operating in the City for some time - Parents at Work (formerly Working Mothers Association), City Women's Network, Women in Banking etc. My interviewees were mostly quite accepting of the status quo and the particular difficulties - or not- that they experienced.

<u>After hours socialising</u>

I found, unsurprisingly, then that outside socialising was reasonably important at the bank - 88% of women socialised with colleagues after work and 100% of men did - and in certain areas entertaining clients was part of the job. People mixed with their colleagues after work in the pub, particularly on a Friday, but this was more so in Securities than in ECFD or SIM. In ECFD there was usually a celebration following

a deal, champagne would be opened and very often the team involved would go out for dinner. Relationships between salesmen and analysts in SSEC would often be cemented through having drinks after work.

Corporate entertainment

Fifty nine per cent of respondents took part in corporate entertaining but there was a gender difference here - nearly double the percentage of men (82%) took part in corporate entertaining than did women (44%), regardless of the division. When asked whether socialising with clients was important, there were again gender differences.

Table 7 ii The importance of socialising with clients in Serco

Do you consider mixing with clients socially to be,			
	Very Important	Important	Not Important.
MEN	32 %(7)	50%(11)	9 %(2)
(2 not applicable)			
WOMEN	8 % (3)	28%(10)	37%(13)
(10 not applicable)			
			sample size 58

Only 8% of women respondents said that socialising with clients was very important compared to 32% of men. A further 25% of women thought that socialising with clients was important, compared to 50% of men. Only 9% of men thought that it was unimportant, compared to 36% of women. Mixing with colleagues was

considered important by 28% of women and 36% of men. Over half the respondents said that domestic responsibilities limited the amount of after hours socialising they did, but there was a marked difference by sex - 36% of men said that domestic responsibilities constrained their informal socialising compared to 63% of women. The most senior woman in ECFD who has five children recognises the part corporate entertaining plays but said

> No. I won't do any entertaining and my clients accept that. At the end of the day what they come to me for is advice not entertainment, someone else can do that. But they keep coming to me for advice and they don't complain. (Female Director, ECFD)

Corporate entertaining in all its forms from the formal outing to an opera or grand dinner to the informal, discretionary lunch or dinner at home is an important aspect of many City jobs, particularly when relationships with clients are important. Some in ECFD consider entertaining clients to be crucial. What happens there is that a couple of men, who are more available i.e. divorced or live in London while their wives are in the country, and enjoy socialising, take on a lot of the client entertaining. One of the heads of the division said he was out four nights every week. These evenings would involve going to the opera, the ballet, a concert or theatre and dinners. Companies, both in the City and elsewhere, are forever thinking up new forms of entertainment for their clients. It is about currying favour, offering something over and above the competition. The more senior the executive, the more exotic and special the invitations will be. They may include overseas trips, weekends away, previews of art exhibitions. Conferences are usually arranged in exotic parts of the world, like the international property conference in Cannes or the bond dealers conference in Gstaad. Some take clients to the Edinburgh Festival or the Munich beer festival. Many of these outings or trips would involve partners

accompanying them. Wives of executives often think these social events a perk but the women I spoke to said that it was harder to drag along a husband or partner. One American broker, Merrill Lynch, flew out a number of clients to Iceland for three days fishing. Others took clients to the Rugby World Cup in South Africa although clients would pay for flights themselves, because of IMRO regulations. Substantial amounts of money are spent on corporate entertaining.

Nearly twice as many men took part in corporate entertaining as women and it was considered more important by men. This may have implications in as much as socialising with clients is an important aspect in the present career structure of the City. Women's exclusion from these activities may impede their progress in the organisation, even though they themselves may feel they are unimportant. Could it be it is important because of their exclusion, in the same way as working long hours is now very important when women are less likely to be able to do that too?

Sport

Popular sport in the bank world was something most people watched rather than played, although away golf days are quite popular and shooting and fishing are highly prized, and make up part of the corporate entertainment package. Tickets to sporting events are given away, like rewards to favoured clients. One broker said to me that the more elite the entertainment, the less chance there was that women would be invited. So a day's shooting or fishing which are very expensive would not be offered to a female client. Likewise, taking clients to watch the World Cup rugby in South Africa would be unlikely to be offered to a female client. At a perhaps less senior level, brokers take clients to events like go-carting, or visits to the dogs, and paintball games. All these types of entertaining were done by the bank. Most of

these activities are accompanied by heavy drinking. I found some evidence that women were organising their own activities.

> When I was on the Japanese side we arranged women's days out - as an alternative to golf days, like a day in the Sanctuary. In Scotland there are lots of women fund managers and I got to know some of them very well. You invite them for dinner etc. (Female Manager, SSEC)

Gentleman Only

The information below is gained from my own knowledge of the City and from male informants, and whilst no respondent told me of specific examples I have no reason to think that Serco is any different from the rest of the City institutions.Whether or not the respondents take part in any of the discussed entertainments, they form a background to the whole City culture, which is important to highlight. Some senior City men are members of one or more gentleman's clubs in St James's e.g. White's, Boodles or Brooks which women and perhaps non-members associate with stuffy libraries, brandy and cigars, innocent in their 'men only-ness'. Dinners take place in and around the City every evening which are black tie and men only. Venues include the Savoy, the Chiswell Street Brewery, one of the many Livery companies, and very often the men will go on to hostess clubs like the Stork Club or to nightclubs like Annabels or Tramp. If sports offers one set of enticement to clients, sex is certainly on offer as another. While dealers and brokers may be taken to Stringfellows on a Monday night for lap dancing, there are more sophisticated arrangements for more senior figures. The restaurant School Dinners has long been a favourite for client lunches. The waitresses dress as schoolgirls and boys who are naughty might get blancmange smeared all over their faces. Another City favourite is the City Circle, called the Titty Circle by people who go there, because the

waitresses don't wear much. Women are allowed in but not allowed to go into certain areas, like the bar! There are many clubs, both private and public, where hostesses look after customers and overseas trips have been known to include the procurement of prostitutes for clients, particularly Far Eastern trips. This is not to say that everyone indulges but sexual excitement and favours in the form of finding girls for clients is accepted as being to the taste of some clients. What is upsetting for women on any occasion where they may inadvertently have been included, is to witness what men together think and say about women.

"Adult " comedian Roy 'Chubby' Brown witnessed an audience of 500 City gents gathered at the invitation of a financial PR company to view his latest film and said he had never seen such a 'frenzied audience'. The film distributor tells that " Every time a woman appeared on the screen they began shouting - 'get your kit off, bitch ' and 'jump the bitch'. It was shocking, and disturbing, that men could behave like that today." [3]

The approach of some of the women to the boys' get togethers was of amused/ bemused acceptance, the 'let them get on with it, they are children really' sort of attitude. When you are immersed in a culture as male as the City, it is easier to accept a lot of it, particularly if it is not directed at you personally, than to make a fuss. But, to women outside the Square Mile some of the entertainment leaves a lot to be desired.

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[3]Taken from an article in Evening Standard April 25th 1994 "It's a Man's World " by Fiona Lafferty .

CONCLUSION

I found the old boy network hard to identify in the airline, where I was more of an outsider and where the men were more 'politically correct'. There is certainly more of a meritocracy than in the bank, where a public school background has already begun the networking process. Yet the whole point of an old boys' network is that it runs as an elite clique within an organisation, which is contrary to the aims of a meritocratic organisation. More men and women in the airline cited the old boy network as a barrier to their career progress than any other barrier. Thirty three per cent of all male and female respondents said it was a barrier to their progress. It seems to be a human characteristic (or is it a male one) that people form informal alliances and circles which exclude other members of an organisation, and qualifications for entry mutate as required. This reaction seems to be based on a need for recognition of status, of privilege, of a sense of belonging to a hierarchally superior group of people. This is a form of closure.

The airline is a large, bureaucratic model of organisation, where discretion is low and rules and procedure still important, where management was quite open and communication good. One may have thought that there were fewer opportunities for the informal to really have an influence. Yet this environment fostered its own kind of networking, based on political alliances with key people in the organisation. Political manoeuvring is vital and requires active work. This may involve attending more meetings than necessary, spending time currying favour for one senior person and generally being seen to be doing things. None of these activities have proved to be popular with women, although I did meet a couple of senior women who seemed very politically adept. As a female researcher I was not able to break into the male fraternity and questions around socialising were met with some defensiveness by my

male respondents, or even denial. This invisibility makes it hard to gauge the impact/ influence of it. Many women in the airline were unaware of any particular form of informal exclusion, but the high numbers who cited the old boys' network as a barrier to career progress showed that they still feel excluded in some way. Almost unconsciously women feel their exclusion. Several talked about the unspoken comfort that men have in each other's company. As Airco woman, who had moved out of Cargo said

> I feel excluded from social activities like golf and also it was partly conversation, partly values; dialogue and debate about issues that I really didn't share the same asumptions. It was really a way of thinking, nothing that I believe anybody was deliberate about, but it made life very isolating - maybe I was oversensitive to it. (Female Manager, Marketing)

Another airline woman said

> I think men should really be made to understand exactly what impact their choice of conversation topics has on the women around them. (Female Manager, Cabin Services)

Playing and talking about sport, senior management's social life and freemasonry seemed to be the most obvious informal activities which excluded women.

> They are more comfortable interfacing with men and they can all be lads together. There is a certain language, a way of talking, topics of conversation that they can have with each other that they don't feel comfortable having with women. You can see this more on a social occasion, when you get to mix socially. (Female MG, Human Resources)

> There is still an unsaid, some sort of comfort that men have around each other that they don't have around women. There are still golf days, there are still boys' nights out, still a strong sense of male affinity, that you sense rather than necessarily see. (Female SM, Human Resources)

> It's how men talk when women aren't around. It is embarrassing sometimes. (Male MG, Cargo)

The old boys' network of the City is far more visible for observers to see, for as I explained, it has always been an acknowledged part of City life. Indeed, most people who are recruited into the City are already in the network so they may not perceive it as such, which may account for the low figure of 15% of respondents citing it as a barrier to their career progress. The bank has a less open style than the airline, and although formal, it is less bureaucratic and the informal side is more critical. The City has its own history of socialising, men's clubs and various forms of entertainment, which continue to this day and are not easily adapted to to include women. Indeed, much of it is based on the exclusion of women. But the women in the bank did far less entertaining and, more significantly, did not think it nearly as important for their jobs as the men did. They are also excluded from certain social activities like going shooting and fishing, as well as the more overtly sexual entertainments. Their ambivalence about their exclusion from these activities and the lack of awareness of the importance of these informal processes were puzzling but fitted in with an overall attitude of denial of inequality that existed in the bank.

There has been some reaction by women to form their own alliances, taking part in activities they may feel more comfortable with. The more formal networks that have been set up are also a response to feelings of exclusion from male networks. But, by their very public formation with a given agenda, they are not informal in the ways that old boy networks are. In some ways the old boy network works invisibly.

Divorced and single women were just as likely to rate the men's club as a barrier as their married counterparts, suggesting that much of the prejudice is against women per se rather than based on worries of the dual role some women have. This is an

area, then, when the 'rationale' based on the 'women have families' dries up, and exclusion is based solely on gender. I contend that this is a patriarchal exclusion which occurs right through society. Although the existence of a 'men's club' may be acknowledged by employees, my research shows how elusive that 'club' is. It operates through a number of informal processes but it is, in effect, more than the sum total of these processes. Its elusiveness and subtlety make it adaptable and it may flourish even within an equal opportunities culture. It is hard for a researcher to capture, and particularly a female one. A lot of my awareness around the concept comes from first hand experience of it, working in finance.

Apart from the obvious obstacles for women with families and the exclusion from informal socialising where sport and sex are used, I found evidence that women are not as keen on using the informal route at work. The emphasis on political networking in the airline may count against women. Because of the more obvious nature of informal life in the City and its traditions, women are automatically 'outsiders' and need to carve out their own ways of informal networking and socialising with men and women.

Many of the clubs which have been meeting places for business contacts and dining clubs in the evenings specifically exclude women. Domestic commitments obviously restrict some women's scope for after hours socialising. The inclusion of wives for dinner parties at a senior level makes it hard for a woman if she has a reluctant partner or is single. The extensive use of sport as a means of entertainment condones the frequent exclusion of women from these activities, because of the masculine nature of the sport. Lastly, the sexual nature of many forms of entertainment which still exist excludes women or, if they are included, marginalises and embarrasses them. Where informal socialising is central to business success or career progress,

women who may be excluded or may not wish to put in the extra time and effort it takes may find themselves at a disadvantage. From a business point of view the large amounts spent on corporate entertaining are hard to justify particularly when compared with the poor maternity benefits on offer (Serco) but perhaps this in itself provides a hint of the priorities of the organisation. The business could just as easily be done without the socialising, and my research shows that women would be happy to do without it; however, whilst it remains a perk for senior men and an opportunity for them to bond together, it is likely to remain part of business life.

CHAPTER EIGHT

SEXUALITY

Sexualised cultures, homosexuality, heterosexuality and sexual harassment

INTRODUCTION

In the first part of the chapter I outline my field of study and my terminology. I then examine feminist developments of theories of sexuality, and discuss some of the developments in the work on sexuality in organisations, before outlining my own approach. I argue against too great a focus on sexuality at work, and critique the work of Pringle (1989), Gherardi (1995), as well as other theorists (Burrell 1992; Giddens 1992) who advocate, albeit in different ways, a more open expression of sexuality and the erotic at work. The first acknowledgement of sexuality in organisations was the feminist naming of unwanted sexual behaviour as sexual harassment. The concept of sexual harassment, with its inherent unequal power relations, sits uneasily amidst the more exciting concepts of sexuality discourses, performivity, masquerade and playfulness at work. I explore notions of sexual harassment and argue that it cannot be consigned to another discourse on sexuality but needs to be located in feminist terms within organisational theory, whilst acknowledging wider issues of sexuality in organisations.

Sexuality was not the sole focus of this study and so my findings on so sensitive a topic may be limited. I hope to show the ways in which sexuality may or may not be expressed and by whom in organisations, the ways it may be overt in an organisation or actively utilised by those in it, and the ways it may promote or inhibit men's and women's progress in the organisation. I aim to contexualise my

findings amid the current trend of seeing sexuality as purely discourse (Butler 1990, 1992, 1993; Harding 1998) and examine the relevance of these theories for women managers. I admit to a scepticism over the proliferation of works on sexuality in postmodern theory, questioning the wisdom of such approaches for feminist study. There is some 'sexiness' in discussing sexuality for, as Eagleton says, there is a case for claiming that sexuality has now become the most fashionable fetish of all (1996 p.69) History tells us that women are too readily consigned/reduced to their sexuality and feminists need to be cautious of the enthusiasm which currently surrounds it.

Sexuality as a constituent of organisational culture

The concept of gendered cultures is now being recognised (Maddock and Parkin 1993; Hearn 1993; Itzin 1995), and I think it is important to keep gendered and sexualised as analytically separate although the two obviously intertwine, as sexuality is part of the 'ongoing production of gender' (Acker 1990 p.250) whilst gender is also part of the ongoing production of sexuality (Halford, Savage and Witz 1997). Some authors have been investigating the link between sexuality and organisational culture (Hearn, 1992b, 1993a, 1994; Maddock and Parkin 1993; Gherardi 1995; Itzin 1995; Cassell and Green 1996; McDowell 1997).

However, instead of talking of an organisational sexuality (Gherardi 1995) or the sexuality of organisation (Burrell and Hearn 1989), I choose to theorise sexuality as part of an organisation's culture for the purpose of this study and use the term sexualised culture. That sexuality may be embedded in an organisation's culture in the same way as gender is recognised.

> Male managers with female subordinates may use sexuality, harassment, joking and abuse as a routine means of maintaining authority. This may be thoroughly embedded in the taken for granted culture of the organisation.(Hearn and Parkin 1987 p.93)

I include sexuality in my list of cultural constituents and see it as a resource on which men may or may not draw as necessary in order to dominate/control/ marginalise women. As one site of male domination (Walby 1990) sexuality is controlled and defined by men (Pringle 1989; Adkins,1992, 1995). I kept the concept of sexual harassment analytically distinct from sexualised culture, as the research shows that the former may occur in both sexualised and unsexualised cultures. This will be discussed in more detail later.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Sexual harassment

Feminists first brought to the public eye the issue of sexual harassment in organisations (Farley 1978; MacKinnon 1979) and have been successful in bringing this concept into the margins of management theory, and certainly into mainstreaming thinking on the discrimination of women at work (EEC guidelines on Sexual Harassment 1991; Rubinstein 1987). Sexual harassment is generally taken to mean many different types of unwanted sexual attention and the focus of much feminist and feminist inspired research into sexuality in organisations has been on the incidence of sexual harassment. (Gutek 1989; Stanko 1988; Stockdale 1991; Collinson and Collinson 1996; Thomas and Kitzinger 1995, 1997; Nicholson 1997; Mott and Conder 1997; Cairns 1997).

A major study initiated by the European Commission in 1987 proved beyond doubt that millions of workers in the European Union are affected by sexual harassment. The report[1] showed that, depending on the questions asked and in what sector of activity the survey was conducted, between 25% and 80% of women had been subject to sexual harassment in their working lives. A study by New Woman magazine (1993) showed that 71% of their sample (1000 women) had received unwanted comments about their appearance and 57% had received offensive remarks at work.[2]

The work on sexual harassment prompted broader debates and studies on sexuality and organisation and many of the organisational writers now writing on sexuality draw on Foucauldian concepts. Academic interest in sexuality of organisations has arisen, also, from the move away from a modernist and managerialist approach to organisations to a focus on to the shifting informal and fluid side of working life, particularly culture. I think that seeing sexuality as a sub-text of organisational life is a helpful approach (Hearn and Parkin 1995). This acknowledges its existence, without giving it too much priority. It is worthwhile examining some aspects of Foucault's theory of sexuality which has influenced feminist approaches to sexuality and the study of sexuality and organisations.

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[1] Michael Rubinstein , " The Dignity of Women at Work . A Report on the Problem of Sexual Harassment in the Member States of the European Communities ."V/412/87. October 1987.
[2] Elini Kyriacou 'Hands Off' in *New Woman* October 1993

Foucauldian view of sexuality

Foucault articulated a constructionist view of sexuality as being the product of discourses, and shot through with power. Real historical formation gives rise to the notion of sex and creates sex in different ways.

> ..sex is the most speculative, most ideal and most internal element in a deployment of sexuality organised by power in its grip on bodies and their materiality, their forces, energies, sensations and pleasures (Foucault 1984 p.155).

Foucault's conception of sexual truths as social constructions struck a chord with feminists, who were also upsetting some of the 'truths' about female sexuality produced by discourses of Western sexuality. The social construction of sexuality offered a route out of the confines of biological determinism, which many feminists felt reduced women to their biology and their biology to their destiny. Sexuality is not something innate, waiting to be freed from repression and oppression, as the writers Reich and Marcuse thought, but is itself constituted by the very discourses in which it is expressed. Feminist assertions that exhort an untainted female sexuality (Irigaray 1985) are impossible for, as Butler puts it

> If sexuality is culturally constructed within existing power relations then the postulation of a normative sexuality that is 'before', 'outside ' or 'beyond' power is a cultural impossibility and a politically impracticable dream (Butler 1990 p.30)

Seeing sexuality as constituted solely through discourse is problematic when dealing with the material effects of sexual violence and sexual harassment. Also, sexuality, particularly female sexuality but increasingly male sexuality, is often appropriated in

work situations (Adkins 1995; Hearn and Parkin 1987) and exploited in the same way as emotions are (Hochschild 1989). Displaying sexual characteristics associated with their sex may be expected in certain jobs in the tourist industry (Adkins 1995), service industries such as waitressing, retailing and advertising. Receptionists and secretaries and bank clerks are often recruited for their appearance and their ability to charm and placate clients. This economic appropriation of sexuality makes it impossible to locate sexuality purely in the cultural or purely as an effect of discourse (Adkins and Lury 1996). I argue to retain a materialist element of sexuality (Hearn and Parkin 1995), which accords with my overall theoretical view that there are limits to the concept of discourse. I think that sexual violence is more than a discourse, although it may be understood through a number of different discourses.

A further attraction to Foucault's theory is his notion of the exercise of power through the discourse of sexuality. For Foucault sexual power like other forms is productive, rather than repressive, and so will always allow for resistance. This concept has led some feminists to see a possibility of resistance by women through the discourse of sexuality (Pringle 1989; Butler 1989; Hollway 1984) - a strategy which has led to some debate (Adkins 1995; Witz and Savage 1992).

But, what Foucault does not do is give an adequate exploration as to why it is that these historical discourses on sex are so systematically produced by men and in men's interests. If feminists view sexuality as existing only within discourses, where power is a part of these discourses rather than existing outside them, then the only recourse to challenge existing relations is with notions of subversion. For Butler this has positive overtones being

> ....the concrete and contemporary task of rethinking subversive possibilities for sexuality and identity within the terms of power itself. (Butler 1990 p.31)

The prospects of resistance are harder to imagine in practice as opposed to theory, and resistance will always be partial.

> Foucault's notion of resistance is very different from feminist notions of women's empowerment because his definition of power underestimates the intransigence of the powerful in defending their privilege, and so does not enquire sufficiently into what resistance to entrenched male power might entail. (Ramazanoglu 1993 p.254)

I argue for an approach which acknowledges pre-discursive relations, which set the parameters of any given discourse. These relations may change and shift in both material ways and ideological ways. They may even be influenced by the discourse they produce or other discourses with a bearing on them.

Another difficulty with a Foucauldian view of sexuality is the privileging he gives to the notion of desire. If sexuality can only be produced through discourse how can desire be created by social processes? MacNay has questioned Foucualt's use of desire as a motivating force, referring to it as a 'problematic fetishization of a notion' (Macnay 1994 p.109). We return here to the paucity of the human subject in a Foucauldian analysis. A strict Foucauldian argument would say that we are born without any inbuilt sexual mechanisms at all, that all differences are attributable to culture and conditioning and what is permitted at any particular time. What of homosexuals and lesbians who have always 'felt' their sexuality to be orientated towards the same sex? I do not think that biology can be ruled out of the picture entirely (Cockburn 1991). Whilst expressions of sexuality vary enormously and are

conditioned by prevailing social and cultural life I believe that an element of human sexuality is innate (Assiter 1996). .

A broader concept of sexuality in organisations

The feminist focus on women as victims of sexual harassment, with its overtones of unequal power relations, lost favour with some feminists, who wished to see a more positive emphasis put on women's sexuality at work and explore the potential pleasure that may be derived from it. (Gherardi 1995; Pringle 1989). Sexuality in organisations is now considered an important aspect of organisational life (Pringle 1989; Hearn and Parkin 1987; Acker 1992). Along with emotion (Swan 1994; Fineman 1993), sexuality is now acknowledged as being part of the human element of labour. Obviously humans are sexual beings and, as workers, will enter an organisation with their instincts, passions, and sexual urges. They will like, love, be attracted to or be repulsed by other workers in their place of work (Gherardi 1995).

One of the first organisational theorists to bemoan the lack of attention to sexuality in organisations was Gibson Burrell. In his early work (1984) he draws heavily on Foucault, seeing sexuality as a historical and social construct and states that although we may recognise some universal attributes we would call sex, there are a plethora of erotic possibilities, a continuum with emotions at one end and sexual intercourse at the other (Burrell 1984 p.71). I find this notion of the continuum problematic and, indeed, Burrell having decided to focus on the sexuality of the latter end of the continuum, seems really to focus on the unemotionality of the workplace. I think Burrell is wrong to confuse emotions like love and comfort with sexuality. Sexuality may well express love and comfort within a relationship, but love and comfort may also be expressed in other, non sexual ways. Giddens (1992)

represents another male theorist who seems at times to confuse sexuality with emotions.

Hearn and Parkin in their work Sex at Work (1987), see sexuality very much at work in organisations. Along with Pringle (1989), they see sexuality as a fundamental, but neglected, structuring principle of organisational life and this is developed further in The Sexuality of Organisation 1989, edited by Hearn, Sheppard, Tancred-Sheriff and Burrell. The different contributions in this book provide evidence that it is very much a male heterosexuality which dominates the workplac (Collinson and Collinson 1989). There has also been some concern that a focus on sexuality will eclipse the attention given to unequal gender relations in organisations (Witz and Savage 1992).

Whilst sexual identity may be important for some groups of people who practice or want to practice non-dominant sexualities, I think of sexuality as being merely one part of our humanity. Sexuality may also be seen as one resource among others which men may draw on to oppress women. In my research I adopted separate agendas for gender and sexuality, and treated sexuality as one aspect of the gendered culture.

<u>Sexuality as subversive - a point of resistance - Pringle</u>

Pringle chooses the discourse of sexuality in her empirical study to show how bosses exercise power over their secretaries (Pringle 1989). She states though that

> Gender and sexuality are central not only in the boss/secretary relation but in all workplace power relations. (Pringle 1989 p.31)

Pringle's departure from the work of liberal and indeed radical feminists is her insistence that although sexuality discourses position men and women in subject and object positions in organisations, sexuality is about pleasure as well as power. Sexuality is also the point of resistance for women in organisations, an assertion which has been criticised by others (Witz and Savage 1992; Adkins 1992, 1995). Her reason for this contention is based on her observation of the fact that some secretaries find some pleasure in these dominant/subordinate relationships. She connects the concept of power with sexuality by saying that men define women's pleasure and that, ipso facto, they are controlling women through pleasure. Could it not be that the power relation is in fact embedded structurally in the relationship of boss and secretary, in itself a gendered relationship? Any space allowed for secretaries to 'parody' and enjoy sexual playfulness is determined/permitted by the man. There are patriarchal parameters to the office banter. It may well be that there is mutual enjoyment of their relationship but that does not alter the essential power relations that exists between them which, whilst acknowledging some material structures, Pringle seems to loses sight of. Pringle's blurring of sexuality, pleasure and power lead her to conclude that women can resist domination by asserting their own sexualities at work. Butler (1989) says the same, but of women's position generally, advocating a subversion of our sexual identities which is resistance. Most women in my study were at pains to play down their sexuality and I would agree with Ramazanoglu's concerns that

> it is not clear how women's accounts of sexuality can be forms of resistance which do anything to subvert the entrenchment of 'penis power' in every area of social life.(Ramanazoglu 1993 p.248)

According to Butler, we cannot name a sexuality outside male control and Pringle concludes that we should accept female sexuality as it is currently constituted and

find opportunities for subversion. Pringle's study has done a lot to widen the agenda of sexuality at work, demonstrating that it pervades the workplace in more subtle ways than incidents of sexual harassment. Cockburn agrees to some extent with her that

> sexual harassment shows only the negative side of organisation sexuality (Cockburn 1991 p.152).

Pleasures

There has been much debate among feminist as to whether there is such a thing as non-coercive heterosexuality. Cockburn claims that there is much sociability for men and women and backs her claim by stating that many marriages are made at work. I would acknowledge that there are many instances of men and women relating well together at work and, perhaps, forming sexual relationships and even marriage and it was an area which I endeavoured to ask about in my research. Adkins criticises the distinction that both Cockburn and Pringle make between coercive sexuality and non-coercive sexuality. For Adkins, like Rich (1980), all heterosexual interactions are structured by the domination and power of men, not just coercive incidents.

Gherardi (1995), too, seems to want a distinction drawn between sexuality and coercive sexuality. When talking about Witz and Savage's critique of the approach to sexuality at work, she claims that they have misunderstood the concept because of the paradox that

> there is no analytical distinction drawn between sexuality and dominance based on sexuality (Gherardi 1995 p.65).

Gherardi (1995) chooses to use the term organisational sexuality, which it seems has a life of its own. She rightly points out the multitude of sexual overtones in organisational life, but imbues these with an organisational identity. She sees organisational sexualities as strategies devised to cope with the demands of a dependence relationship i.e. employee/employer. The entry of women into previously male-dominated organisations has turned them into arenas where gender relations between men and women are negotiated.

Most of Gherardi 's material is taken from case studies of shop floors, where the role of sexual banter may well be to alleviate boredom and a device to cope with their subordinate enployee position (Collinson and Collinson 1989), but in management this is less likely to be the case. As another advocate of more sexual pleasure at work, Burrell, says,

> "If we remain true to the theory of pleasure... then there is the hope that our practice will be enriched by it." (Burrell 1992 p.182)

He asks at the end of his work (1992) how this new 'eroticized' sociology would relate to feminist scholarship and acknowledges the potential problem. Gherardi (1995) has attempted to combine the two

> "Let us admit therefore that we seek erotic gratification in our work, that organisations inhabit our sexual imaginations and that we use organisations to fulfil our sexual fantasies." (Gherardi 1995 p.60)

I show later that the ways in which women are permitted to express their sexuality is very limited and particularly so for senior managers. For men, female sexuality is

translated into female availability and the negative overtones associated with female sexuality are strong enough for women to 'manage' their sexuality at work. However, despite Adkins' insistence, mutual affection, even attraction, need not always be problematic. I find Adkins' critique too harsh. I would agree with Cockburn that there can be a difference between a mutual attraction and, say, sexual harassment but Adkins' point is borne out by the evidence that it is most likely to be women who suffer as a result of a relationship at work. It would be impossible, though, to censor out all elements of attraction and affection that members of an organisation may have for each other. MacKinnon (1979) whose work did much to promote public recognition of sexual harassment as a legal issue, was keen to emphasise that it was not her aim to repress all free expressions of sexuality.

> Objections to sexual harassment at work is not a neo puritanical moral protest, against signs of attraction, displays of affection, compliments, flirtation etc.(Mackinnon 1979 p.25)

The problem thrown up here is that, if we understand sexuality to be patriarchally structured, women themselves often find it hard to know what stands for a compliment and what may be read by others as being disrespectful. If, as Pringle (1989) says, it is men who define women's pleasure, then indeed at some level the difference between coercive and non-coercive heterosexuality is hard to pin down. This element of hegemonic acquiescence by women in the face of sometimes unpleasant aspects of male sexuality is highlighted in many of the studies of sexual harassment in which women find it difficult to name the behaviour as such (Cairns 1997; Thomas and Kitzinger 1995, 1997).

How relevant are these debates on sexuality in the workplace for my research and can they further our understanding of sexual harassment and discrimination? I think the use of sexuality as a means of resistance by women to men's power in organisations is fraught with difficulties and the recent trend to eroticising the organisation [3] highlights the danger of moving the focus away from gender to sexuality. Is there any evidence that discourses of sexuality act as a means of resistance for women in organisations? Was there any evidence of women subverting male power through sexuality in my research? Can I conceptualise sexuality and sexual harassment adequately as part of an organisational culture and consider their impact on women managers through this means? Can sexuality be considered a resource on which men draw to marginalise/exclude women at work? Which sexualised aspects of organisations constitute some form of closure to women managers? Could I find any evidence of this?

METHODS

Operationalising sexuality for the purposes of research is problematic and, if this was just a study of sexuality, I would have approached the methods in a different way. As it was, it was just one aspect of my research and, as such, I did not want to focus on it at the risk of frightening off respondents who otherwise gave me good data on other aspects of the culture. Discussing sensitive issues in social research requires a very special approach (O'Connell Davidson and Layder 1994) and not one that I was undertaking in a business environment. When interviewing people in their workplace about their work, conversation tends to be conducted on a professional basis and many respondents preferred to talk only about the content of their work. If

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[3] See Brewis and Grey (1994) for a critique of this trend.

I managed to establish a good rapport with an interviewee, I would take the opportunity to try to find out more about the other aspects of work, including sexuality.

Outside academic discourse, sexuality in organisations it is not a familiar concept and whenever I mentioned it outright in pilot work people roared with laughter. Then, perhaps, they may have stopped to think about it and say, 'I suppose you mean people having affairs,' or some alighted on harassment but no one I spoke to had given it much thought before. In this way this research, like other feminist research, is concerned with revealing hitherto hidden gendered aspects of women's and men's lives - the taken for granted norms in life, which in reality display the prevalence of male experience and interpretation.

Learning from pilot work then, I never asked the direct question - what about sexuality at work? - either in interviews or on the questionnaire, but chose to break down the elements of sexuality I felt were present in the workplace into concepts that respondents would recognise and feel comfortable with. With some interviewees I did not raise the topic at all. These were the ones who were unwilling to discuss gender so introducing sexuality was pointless. In the airline this may be due to the awareness around gender issues and the desire to be seen as gender neutral. Or it may have been because I was a younger woman with whom a discussion of the subject would have seemed inappropriate. The younger men were more comfortable discussing sexual issues, often more so than women. In the same way as Pringle (1989) found in her research on secretaries, once people started talking they were quite free and informative considering I was tape recording it all. The bank employees were much more cautious, as they were about all things personal, apart from the foreign women who were very open. Generally people were more

comfortable talking about what had happened in their old department or old job than in what was happening now.

I was trying to capture the broader aspects/expressions of sexuality at work as well as sexual harassment incidents. My data on sexuality comes from my own observations in the workplace, information gained during interviews and the questionnaires. The sexuality in organisations, that has been surrounded by silence for so long, has been a male defined heterosexuality - some would say a compulsory heterosexuality (Rich 1980; Adkins 1995). My initial interviews in the airline made me aware that there was not always the presumption of heterosexuality there, so I included the question - "Is there a presumption of heterosexuality in your department?" in my questionnaire for both case studies. I had no preconceptions as to the implications of what this meant as far as gender relations were concerned. Nor did I particularly set out to discover whether homosexual men or women suffered discrimination. But the overt presence of homosexuals in the workforce made it vital to be clear about the distinction between gender and sexuality, so I asked whether the respondent suffered hostility due to his/her gender and, secondly, whether the respondents suffered hostility due to his/her sexuality.

Constituents of sexuality which I deemed to be tangible enough to capture through questions included sexual humour in the workplace, swearing and the use of sexual metaphors in organisational language. Other indicators of a sexualised culture may be the dress of the workers and the physicality of the workplace. By this I do not just mean pin-ups of page three girls but other indicators that the organisation may encourage the expression of sexuality, rather than aim to repress it. A contrast may be a public library and a Soho advertising agency. In this sense I used Gagliardi's (1990) ideas about architectural symbols. This was to capture the overt sexual

overtones of the business environment. I discuss the sexualised forms of entertainment in the chapter on informal socialising, which add to this data on sexuality, albeit most of it takes place out of the workplace. Management of sexuality has been an important acknowledgement in the lives of women managers (Sheppard 1989) so I asked respondents whether they dressed so as to avoid unwanted sexual attention, whether comments were made on dress and whether these were objected to.

Operationalisation of sexual harassment

Sexual harassment is generally taken to mean many different types of unwanted sexual attention (Gutek 1989; Stanko 1990; Stockdale 1991; Di Tomaso 1989). At its broadest definition, the EEC Code of Practice 1991 defines it as

> unwanted conduct of a sexual nature or other conduct based on sex affecting the dignity of women and men at work. This can include unwelcome physical, verbal or non verbal conduct. (Section 2.1)

It goes on to say that the essential characteristic of sexual harassment is that it is, 'unwanted', that it is for each individual to determine what behaviour is acceptable to them and what they regard as offensive. (Section 2.3)

Media coverage of sexual harassment cases has ensured that most people are familiar with the term although many would not know the broad official definition. Some of the findings and respondents' stories on language and dress would constitute sexual harassment but the respondents themselves tended to refer to them as a examples of a male culture rather than sexual harassment. In the interpretation most often taken sexual harassment acts as a means by which individual men can exclude women or control them (Stockdale 1991). During my research it became clear that

most respondents took this individualist interpretation of one or perhaps two men giving unwanted sexual attention to one woman, usually privately. This may involve touching, demanding sexual favours, put downs, or bullying, being singled out in some way, without other members of the work environment necessarily being aware of it.

On the subject of harassment I asked whether the respondents had any knowledge of any incidents of sexual harassment in their organisation and, then, whether they had ever been on the receiving end of any sexually offensive behaviour. There were also questions on whether any of the offensive sexual behaviour had occurred more than once and whether had it been reported. I deliberately used this phrase, rather than sexual harassment when referring to the experience of the respondent, because of the differences in perception of harassment. It is clear from surveys which have allowed for more latitude in sexual harassment for women's own interpretations that many are reluctant to employ the term when talking about their own experience (Thomas and Kitzinger 1995, 1997).

I think my mix of methods worked well. Such was the seniority and reserve of some of my interviewees that it would have been impossible for me to ask about sexual harassment straight out in an interview, but some women did bring up incidents voluntarily, not necessarily calling it harassment, although many more acknowledged it in the anonymous questionnaires. Some of my interview data gave me an insight into the occurrence of it and some of the ways it was expressed, but the quantitative data gave me a truer idea of how widespread it was.

The more covert elements of sexuality, like perhaps the affairs I missed, or the way men talked together, I, as a female outside researcher was obviously not privy to. I

found the young men in the airline particularly helpful and quite honest in the way they talked to me and a couple of them said that it was only when women were not around that they were talked about in a less than flattering way.

RESULTS

I set out my findings on whether or not the culture is strongly heterosexual and the impact this has for gender relations, the existence of sexual language and humour, the management of sexuality through dress and the incidence of sexual harassment. I discuss the findings first for the overall organisation and then, if appropriate, in a breakdown of divisions.

THE PRESUMPTION OR NOT OF HETEROSEXUALITY

Airco

Very few business organisations acknowledge the presence of either male homosexuals or lesbians and they often have to keep their sexuality secret. (Hall, 1989). Those organisations in which homosexuality may be the norm, or at least accepted openly, are those which have an ideological interest in doing so e.g. gay collectives, gay switchboard, lesbian business (Weston and Rofel 1985).

There have been very few studies of non-heterosexual work environments and certainly none of any large business organisations. As Hall says, homosexuality, because it is so often over sexualised, cannot be accommodated in organisations which encourage sexuality to be left at home (1989). Men are often homophobic, and the presence of a homosexual man can threaten the bonding, which very often uses a mutual sexuality, of the heterosexual males.

In the airline, the sheer numbers of homosexual men in the cabin crew divisions meant that the whole organisation was aware of homosexuality and, whilst some divisions differed in their own acceptance of it, the topic wasn't taboo and, if not a celebration of it, there was a general climate of tolerance. The airline was aware of the sexuality of its staff and I was told, by one of the leaders in cabin services, that homosexual men made the best cabin stewards of all. As a rough figure, I was told that about 85% of all male stewards were homosexual. Overall in the airline 50% of all respondents said there was a presumption of heterosexuality, but this was skewed by cabin services, where only 8% respondents said there was a presumption of heterosexuality.

Table 8i Airco- Is there a presumption of heterosexuality in your department?

Division	Presumption of heterosexuality	
	yes	
Cabin Services	8%	1 out of 13
Cargo	70%	7 out of 10
Human Resources	40%	12 out of 30
Finance	63%	19 out of 30
Marketing	64%	9 out of 14

sample size 97.

Table 8ii **What are relations between men and women like in Airco ?**

Division	Relations between men and women are		
	Excellent	Good	Mediocre
Cabin services	67% (9)	33.% (4)	0% (0)
Cargo	20% (2)	70% (7)	10% (1)
Human resources	50 % (15)	40% (12)	10% (3)
Finance	17% (5)	77% (23)	7% (2)
Marketing	57 % (8)	43% (6)	0% (0)
			sample size 97

DIVISIONS

Cabin services

The large proportion of homosexual workforce has forced sexual issues out into the open. This division has had to deal with promiscuity among the stewards and stewardesses, harassment of stewardesses on the aircraft and Aids. The working environment was very open and style of management person centred (see management style). Travel perks extended to partners of either sex.

Sixty seven per cent of all respondents here said that relations between men and women were excellent compared to, say, only 16% in finance. From my own observation and time spent there, I found most of the men very easy to be with and the women seemed at ease in their managerial roles. Could the presence of large numbers of homosexual men in a division dilute or displace some of the sexual attention that is paid towards women in organisational environments? Because the sexuality is not presumed heterosexual, women's presence in the workplace does not seem to be breaking the 'symbolic gender order' (Gherardi 1996). Some writers have suggested that men use their sexuality to bond together in the workplace (Collinson

and Collinson 1989,1996; Collinson and Hearn 1996) - from the shopfloor yells of 'Did you get your leg over last night' to the no less subtle business trips to Bangkok. Heterosexual male cabin crew managers, and senior managers were used to working with homosexuals and hence, as one put it, 'you wouldn't last a day here if you came on all macho'. To that extent they may have had to be comfortable with their own sexuality and there was no place for homophobia.

> We have male/female, straight, gay, black, white, Asian, African, European etc. and we accept them for who they are. It's a wonderful thing in this department that we have such a mix and variety of people. It lends itself to the general acceptance of an individual for themselves, as opposed to what we think they should be and that they fit into a square box which suits our purposes. (Female MG, Cabin Services)

Cargo

At the other end of the scale was Cargo, where 70% of respondents presumed heterosexuality. Cargo is a traditional, male dominated stronghold which operates as an autonomous business unit i.e. with its own profit and loss account, its own human resource and finance division, As such it had avoided a lot of the impact of BA's policy and values initiatives, including its equal opportunity ones. However, a forward thinking, pro-feminist male Human Resources senior manager has had some influence over values in the division. But the toughness of the work on the shopfloor somehow infiltrated the management floors and management which required a degree of 'toughness' too, and prohibited any overt recognition of homosexuals within the division.

Human Resources

In this division only 40% presumed heterosexuality. HR had a high percentage of senior women managers. I found them to be an open minded and a very aware

group of people, which one would expect given that their work is looking outward into the organisation and dealing with difficulties and personnel problems - e.g. policies on equal opportunities come out of this department. It is outwardly a woman friendly environment - lots of women and lots of family-minded men. Also the work in the past has been based on relationship building so the type of men who have chosen that work are a lot less likely to display 'macho' behaviour than say managers in finance. I came across a couple of homosexual men but the environment in the department was more 'homely' than sexual. Homosexuality was certainly tolerated. Relations between men and women rated highly with 50% saying excellent and 40% saying good.

Finance

This division was quite traditional and 63% of respondents presumed heterosexuality. Of all the divisions I went to this one was the most conservative and expressions of individuality were not encouraged. Senior management was quite tough and macho and not at all good at people management. Issues were discussed without any reference to the people who may or may not have been involved or affected by decisions that were being made. Relations between men and women - 16% of finance respondents said that relations between men and women were excellent but a further 70% saying they were good.

Marketing

In this division 64% of respondents presumed heterosexuality, which I found quite high given the youth of the marketing managers. I would have expected them to be more open-minded but then the division was unlike the rest of the airline, employing more 'outside' experts, who were not so engrained in the airline culture, than any

other division. Being a small group, it may not be representative. Relations between men and women were good - 57% saying excellent.

Serco

In the bank 72% of all respondents presumed heterosexuality in the workplace and this was broken down quite evenly across the divisions. The City, with its tradition as a place of work for gentlemen, has never been accommodating of homosexuals. There was no mention of homosexuality, nor did I come across any lesbians or gay men knowingly. I would say it would be extremely difficult to 'come out' although rumours fly around certain City figures, who are described as confirmed bachelors, but their homosexuality is never openly acknowledged. I had been told that homosexual men socialised with others from different institutions and had their own network but I found out no more about this. So the environment here was definitely heterosexual, and this was displayed in different forms, some more aggressively than others. Even so, relations between men and women appeared good with 31% saying relations between men and women were excellent with 64% saying they were good. There are no statistical divisional breakdowns for the second case study as the numbers were to small to make them relevant.

Conclusion on impact of presumption of heterosexuality in both organisations

I found through this data on sexuality that, in the divisions where there is no presumption of heterosexuality and there is a high proportion of homosexuals, relations between men and women were statistically significantly better than in other divisions in the airline, making the presumption or not of heterosexuality an important influence on gender relations.

The implications for the presumption or not of heterosexuality may be quite important in other respects. I believe the make up of the work force had an impact on the style of management I found there (see management style chapter), which was extremely open and person centred. This variable in turn may also have accounted for the good relations between men and women in the division. I contend, then, that the lack of an overtly heterosexual environment may create an easier climate for women to work. Its impact is felt not only on the women but on management as a whole, resulting in an overtly masculine approach being unacceptable. The sexual tolerance of management may also mean that the male managers are secure in their own sexuality, as homophobia and misogyny may be interpreted as symptoms of insecurity and anxiety about male sexuality, which is then projected on to women and homosexuals. The differences between men and women are pronounced in exaggerated heterosexual cultures - usually to women's detriment, whereas, in more of a homosexual setting, these differences may be minimised.

This set of data shows the importance of keeping sexuality and gender separate and that, when talking about sexuality, we need to identify it (Adkins 1995). In terms of my theoretical concepts, I would argue that in Cabin Services the resource of a male defined heterosexuality was less available for men to use against women. This is not to suggest that homosexual men are automatically less misogynistic than heterosexual men - some of the expressions used for women in certain groups leave a lot to be desired, fag hags etc etc.- but that there is less likelihood of sexual oppression. This leads to the conclusion that the very notion of heterosexuality is imbued with sexual dominance of men over women, supporting Adkins' argument (1995). Without heterosexuality as the prevailing sexuality in the culture we remove, to a large degree, the sexually oppressive nature of the culture. Male heterosexual domination has been subverted by homosexuality but not by women 's sexuality.

DRESS

My data on dress comes from my own observations as well as a questionnaire, which asked respondents whether they dressed so as to avoid sexual attention. Male managers in most organisations dress in a very similar way - I nearly said uniform which may be more pertinent in that the dark suit is a form of uniform to denote impersonality and uniformity and of course desexualises them. Expressions of individuality are allowed in the choice of colour, i.e. grey, blue or black, style of suit i.e. double or single-breasted, turn-ups or not, and design and colour of tie. When women first entered the professions and managerial strata of organisations they often emulated this uniform with a navy blue suit and floppy bow tie. This conservative style of dress stressed their 'sameness' to men and expressed a desire to fit in with the environment. Strange then that trousers were, and still are in some organisations, seen as 'unprofessional' when really they are considered unladylike. Managerial women walk a tightrope, trying to balance these two characteristics, ladylike or feminine and professional, both of which are constructed by men. Wolf points out that all the choice in the world will not overcome this dilemma, given workplace requirements for femininity and the equation of femininity with sexual availability. (Wolf 1990 p.248)

I believe that, as more women have entered management both of these concepts, (professional and feminine) are being contested by women. Professionalism emphasises traits associated with masculinity such as rationality and impartiality and single mindedness, whilst feminine has been constructed as the other (Gherardi 1995), inhabiting the realms of emotion and intuition. The cloak of professionalism, provided by an expensive suit, is meant to compensate for women's inherent/innate lack of it (professionalism). The professional dress code for women is used not

only to present a uniform, rational image acceptable to the male environment but also to disguise female sexuality, by de-emphasising any curves. If you look too much like a woman, particularly a type of woman held up by the media to be sexually available to men, you will be derided in a business setting.

Results - Dress in Airco

Despite the broad acceptance of equal opportunities and the presence of a lot of women at management level, 37% of all respondents said that they dressed for work so as to avoid attracting sexual attention. I found them to be generally conservatively dressed, smart but not designer clad, more Marks and Spencer than Armani. There were some interesting differences between divisions. A far smaller percentage of women in Cabin Services and Human Resources dressed so as to avoid attracting sexual attention. This fits in with my other findings, that in the divisions which were not aggressively heterosexual, women were less self-conscious about their own sexuality.

Table 8 iii

Percentage of women who dressed so as to avoid attracting sexual attention

Division	Dressed to avoid attracting sexual attention.
Cabin Services	28% (2 out of 7)
Cargo	60% (3 out of 5)
Human Resources	25% (5 out of 20)
Finance	43% (9 out of 21)
Marketing	40% (4 out of 10)
	sample size 97

Within the airline the marketing men stood out as being the most fashionable. As the creative force in the business they felt freer to express their taste in clothes and one senior director I interviewed wore a purple designer shirt and wore his long curly, grey hair sleeked back. On Fridays the marketing division had a 'dress down' day when they all came in jeans, something a lot of American companies do in order to wind down ahead of the weekend. A recent report warned that these dress down days, which many of the American banks are now doing in London, spell disaster for the professional woman (Hunter 1995).

The following episode illustrates the requirement that women have a dress code to allay the anxiety of men. One senior woman manager in the airline was dressed in jeans and sweatshirt for Breakthrough week in Cabin Services - helping out in a blow up castle in the atrium of the building. I sat in on a meeting with her and six men at which they were discussing another meeting scheduled for that afternoon with a director from the main board. She said unworriedly, 'Oh dear, I'll just have to go like this' and I could sense genuine alarm among some of the men. One of them said, 'Surely you have your work clothes with you' and she shrugged her shoulders and said, 'no, actually I haven't.' She looked very young and girly and quite a contrast to the professional 'suited' senior manager she was on normal days, and it was the men who found this disconcerting .

There is some evidence that women are beginning to contest the dominant discourse of suits at work and some dress more to please themselves, wearing bright colours,although dresses as opposed to suits are more unusual.

> I wore a dress the other day for the first time in ages, and one of the men commented on my appearance. I was embarrassed and I think I blushed a bit. I'd never normally wear a dress. (Female Senior Manager, Airline)

However, I wouldn't say that being more individual in choice of clothes amounted to subversion, as Pringle might see it. Every style available to women is marked and noticed whereas men's style as the norm is unmarked and unnoticed (MacDowell 1997).

Results - Dress in Serco

- **28%** of women respondents said they dressed so as to avoid attracting sexual attention.

This lower figure than the airline again shows that the women were not generally aware of any discrimination at work, or that they were fearful to report it. Professional dress was more of a preoccupation at the bank than at the airline and, in some ways, there is less leeway to dress differently. Both men and women dressed more expensively and more smartly in the bank - they were all paid a lot more and the environment was a lot more formal. Money and status demanded smart clothing.

The women wore skirts and jackets or suits, often in black and navy, although a couple of women I met wore bright colours. One Spanish woman, who was very stylishly dressed said she couldn't understand why the English women dressed so dully. She wore bright colours and high heels and was considered quite flamboyant but, as a foreigner, perhaps she could get away with it. You are highly visible as a woman in a male dominated office and what you wear will be noticed. On a trading floor women receive comments all the time about colour of tights, belts, hairstyle and it is considered part of the job, although men too will be ribbed if they come in wearing a new hairstyle or new tie.

> Never wear the same clothes two days in a row , that means you didn't go back to your own flat and you'll get stick for that. (Female Manager, SSEC)

Sheppard (1989) gives details of the ways in which women choose their clothes carefully to project the right image. They must never dress too glamourously - the sexuality detracts from professionalism. Women are always vulnerable to the attention paid to their sexuality as Sheppard's example of the woman who had successfully conducted a business meeting only to be met with, 'you're a real sexy broad', shows. She blamed herself for wearing a red dress. One woman in the bank was giving a fund manager some advice on a stock when he interrupted her to say, 'Have you done something to your eyebrows?', thus ignoring her 'professionalism' and drawing attention to her body/appearance. What he is saying is 'I'm thinking about your sex not your brains and you have nothing important to say to me' and she knows this is what he is saying and yet is unable to reply. Instead the hegemonic discourse, which insists that women's appearance is of primary importance, means that she wonders whether she ought to be flattered that he had noticed something physical about her? This illustrates the danger of the strategy promoting women's enjoyment or expression of her sexuality more at work - she is always at risk of being reduced to sex, which means in everyday culture available to men.

None of the women I interviewed wore trousers although I saw a few around the airline. A woman from the securities division of the bank said that when she wore an expensive trouser suit in her last job, a senior director in the division told her it was 'unprofessional' and that he didn't want to see her wearing them again.

> "I went mad and went straight upstairs to talk to W (chief executive) and said, 'Am I right in saying that I am employed for my abilities to sell equities rather than what I wear?'. He supported me and the other guy had to apologise." (Female SSEC)

I think that my data on dress accords with Collinson and Collinson's (1996) view that women take it upon themselves to manage their appearance to ward off unwanted attention. Whilst receiving sexual attention in some circumstances may be welcome, most women feel that detracts from their professionalism in a work setting. I suggest that it is often intended to do just that. It is also noteworthy that the two divisions where women were less likely to consciously dress to avoid sexual attention were Cabin Services and Human Resources which were the least heterosexualised cultures of the airline. This may be an indicator that women felt more at ease dressing as they pleased rather than thinking through the consequences of looking too sexual. In these divisions they were least likely to receive any overt attention about their dress. I contend that, without a strongly male heterosexual environment, women felt more able to express their sexuality.

<u>SEXUAL LANGUAGE - swearing , sexual metaphors and sexual humour</u>

<u>Airco - results</u>

- **21%** of respondents said swearing was part of everyday discourse
- **62%** saying it was used sometimes.
- No questionnaire respondent was offended by it and from my observation it was the odd adjective as opposed to every other word.
- **41 %** of airline respondents reporting the use of sexual metaphors and
- **58%** of respondents said that sexual humour was used.

At no time did any woman complain to me about language even though the airline's equal opportunities policy contained a very wide approach to sexual harassment which includes the use of sexual language. Cabin Services, Marketing and Human Resources showed no gender difference in reporting of swearing, sexual humour and

sexual metaphor but the more male dominated areas of Cargo and Finance showed that sexual humour was reported by many more women than men. Sexual humour is usually much more explicit in its portrayal of women's sexuality than swearing. Because of the normalising effect of everyday discourse swearing has become almost acceptable language in our culture. The sexual implications of say 'bugger' and 'fuck that' have almost disappeared in this context.

Serco- results

The language in the bank, and in the finance business generally, is much more aggressive and sexualised than the language in the airline, particularly in the trading areas. I found many of the women I interviewed at the bank swore a lot.

> Swearing is part and parcel of life around here. I swear as much, if not more than, most. (Female Director, SSEC)

But none of the men swore during my interviews with them.

- **28%** said that swearing was part of their everyday language and
- **62%** said it was used sometimes.

Swearing occurs more in the trading areas of the bank where it forms expression of frustration, elation or any other emotion that goes with dealing in millions of pounds. It has always been accommodated and viewed as a kind of release from tension. In these areas where the swearing forms part of the dominant discourse women use different strategies for dealing with it. Along with other researchers (Cairns 1997; Thomas and Kitzinger 1997; MacDowell 1997) I noted that women adopted a strategy of passive resistance, ignoring rather than challenging sexist language.

Although the woman, quoted above, swears as much as the men herself there were others I interviewed who found it offensive.

> I couldn't believe the language. I just sat there with my mouth open for the first few weeks, saying, 'I'm sorry, what did you say?' I'm sure it would count for sexual harassment in the US. But here everyone swears, even the directors' language is peppered with expletives. The words lose their power when they are used so often. I hardly ever swear so if I do they all know something is badly wrong. (Female Capital Markets, Manager)

However, even the women who ignored the language or swore a bit themselves drew the line at certain words, particularly the c word which still retains its offensiveness to women. In another department, treasury operations, there was no bad language at all.

> Usually this kind of department is bad - generally for harassment and language but because of the boss here, he doesn't like that kind of thing, so no one does it . The behaviour is excellent and its a nice place to work even if there are very few women. People are polite. (Female Manager, Treasury)

This illustrates the power of leadership in setting the tone of a division, department or even organisation. He felt very strongly about swearing and so there wasn't any. His views were based on a moral stance and not necessarily because he was concerned with the discomfort of his female employees, but the by-product of his stance was that the women I spoke with there found the working environment pleasant.

Sexual metaphors were in frequent use although only roughly the same percentage of respondents as the airline respondents noted their existence - 43%. Business language, as I have noted, is full of sexual metaphors. In the City there are more overt sexual references in speech than elsewhere; companies are raped, flirt with

each other, make passes, touch up, get into bed with each other, marry each other and divorce each other. Stocks are sexy if their profits are going up, and dogs if they are not, companies penetrate new markets and asking, for a price of a stock, a dealer might say "what do you want me to do, lift up my skirt and show you the lot?" The whole language has a sexual overtone to it, which is never analysed or even acknowledged. Given its everyday use then, I was surprised that only 43% of bank respondents noted the use of sexual metaphors but such may be the power of hegemonic discourse that both men and women remain unconnected to the sexual implications of what they are saying all the time. No one seems to question the correctness of this language and, as newcomers to the industry, women have had to enter this discourse of sexual language (Cohn 1987), which uses a heterosexuality constructed by men in terms of dominant and subordinate positions. Harlow, Hearn and Parkin's imaginative analysis of the din and noise of organisations (Harlow, Hearn and Parkin 1996) explores how

> within language, other dimensions of male control can be recognised when the sexualised language of the organisation demonstrate the interconnections of sexuality and gender power. (Harlow, Hearn and Parkin 1996 p.100)

They call this the din of male harassment through language and it seems a relevant description of stock market language.

Sexual humour - **48%** of the bank said sexual humour was used.

Humour denotes the acceptable values of an organisation and as such is a useful measure of them (Trice and Beyer 1993).

> In contrast to the exclusion of women by male clubbing this culture (humour) includes women but marginalises and controls them. (Cockburn 1991 p.81)

This presents women with a double bind. By not laughing they show themselves to be different and risk being alienated as not having as sense of humour. But, if they join in, they are in danger of losing their 'feminine' status and will be talked about for that. It is impossible to be 'one of the boys.' One woman I met worked on an all male desk where the language and humour was distinctly spicy. She decided to join in with it, often telling dirtier jokes than the men, and on one occasion, debagging her boss at a Christmas party. What happened was that she alienated the other professional women in the bank and the men talked about her in a derogatory fashion behind her back, anyway. Women must laugh at men's sexual references and jokes but should they talk in a similar vein it is considered distasteful.

> What is funny coming from a man is obscene coming from a woman. (Cockburn 1991 p.154)

One female saleswoman said "You must have a sense of humour or you've had it." Yet the humour there turned around references to her sleeping with clients and constant sexual innuendoes. She accepted most of it but said that at times they went too far, "you have to tell them to stop, otherwise they won't."

One purpose of sexual language, according to Collinson and Collinson is that it serves to bond men in certain work situations (Collinson and Collinson 1989, 1996). Humour, jokes and language games are very important for the construction of masculinity (Collinson and Collinson 1989). Gherardi looks mostly at working class cultures and claims that language is used in different ways according to the extent to which female labour is segregated (Gherardi 1995). Where there is a high degree of

segregation, with men assigned control over the technology and supervision of women's work she says

> The sexualisation of language in the form of jokes and humour deployed in the vicinity of the female body, has the dual purpose of reaffirming the dependence of the women on the men, and of relieving the men's dependence on the managers.(Gherardi 1995 p.53)

Whilst acknowledging that this was not the women's game, they were resigned to it and it was more irritating than offensive, and 'none of them would have called it sexual harassment', (Gherardi 1995 p54). It is only 'irritation', she claims, because the references were never personal. I take issue with this silent acquiescence. A lot of people may be offended by language which is not 'personal'. How personal is a racist joke told in front of a black person? Women can become accustomed to all kinds of behaviour, which they would not call harassment, if there is no alternative discourse in which to express their thoughts. The business language in the City was sexualised long before the arrival of women which points to the fact that the connection is between men, power, their work and their sexuality. Language on the Stock Exchange floor was renowned for its sexism yet women were not allowed there until 1973.

Gherardi's second and analytically separate category of sexist language is when women are less segregated.

> Here the sexualisation of the workplace takes the form of aggression, of reducing women to silence, of disciplining their behaviour. (Gherardi 1995 p.55)

Men, she says, try to affirm their virility by humiliating women. In this situation, even when the references are not explicitly directed towards the women present, they may be forced to join in the men's' sexual banter, "which they usually interpret as violent rather than amusing." I would argue that both forms of sexualisation of language, drawing on derogatory imagery of women are used as a resource to remind men of their superiority over women regardless of whether they are there or not.

The extent to which women themselves used sexual language is significant and accords with McDowell's findings in her research (1997). I have pondered on this complicity of women to the oppression of women through language and in some ways, I think there is a reluctance to acknowledge the extent to which men degrade women through language (Cockburn 1991). Many of the women accepted sexual and sexist language and behaviour to be part of the job - a professional hazard that had to be coped with but nothing to do with them individually. One woman in securities said, "As long as its not directed at me, I ignore it."

Conclusion on sexual language

The discourse of sexual language and humour was more pointed in the bank than in the airline. Sexual language can be alienating and exclusionary to women. Sexist jokes serve as a reminder to women as to their inferior gender status, whatever their professional level, and women are expected to laugh along with it. In the bank women had to participate in a discourse that constructed them as sexual subordinates or not talk at all. The use of sexual language in the workplace can mark the territory as heterosexual or not. Women may use sexual language in order to be one of the boys but, in a similar way to women who may manage in a 'masculine' style, these women will be derided for being unfeminine.

SEXUAL HARASSMENT

Sexual harassment is a generally recognised problem and many organisations are now actively trying to eradicate it. My first case study, Airco, has an equal opportunities policy booklet which contains a section on sexual harassment. The merchant bank, however, had no equal opportunities policy, let alone any statements on sexual harassment, and it certainly was not taken at all seriously by any of the men I met, although the female personnel director was trying to bring it onto the company's agenda.

Sexual harassment in Airco

Airco's definition of sexual harassment:-

> Unwanted conduct of a sexual nature or conduct based on sex which is offensive to the recipient. Specific examples include unwanted physical contact, verbal contact like unwelcome sexual suggestions, offensive flirtations and suggestive remarks, innuendoes or lewd comments, non verbal conduct, which is displaying of pornographic or sexually suggestive pictures, objects or written materials, and sex based conduct : conduct which denigrates or ridicules or is intimidatory or physically abusive of an employee because of his or her sex.

At first glance the following figures strike one as being very high, considering the seniority of the women respondents.

- **41%** of all respondents knew of a case of sexual harassment
- **28%** of male respondents knew of a case of sexual harassment and
- **49%** of women respondents knew of a case of sexual harassment

- **30%** of all women respondents had been on the receiving end of offensive sexual behaviour and
- **6%** of all male respondents had been on the receiving end of unwanted sexual attention.

- **88%** of respondents said that the harassment had occurred more than once yet
- No respondent had reported any incident at all.

DIVISIONS
Cabin Services

- **39%** of all respondents knew of incident of sexual harassment
- **33%** men knew of incident of sexual harassment
- **42%** women knew of incident of sexual harassment
- **14%** of women had been on receiving end of sexually offensive behaviour.

Cargo

- **38%** of all respondents knew of incident of sexual harassment
- **20%** of men knew of incident of sexual harassment
- **43%** of women knew of incident of sexual harassment
- No respondent had been on receiving end of sexually offensive behaviour

Human Resources

- **57%** of all respondents knew of incident of sexual harassment
- **44%** of men knew of incident of sexual harassment
- **62%** of women knew of incident of sexual harassment
- **63%** of women had been on the receiving end of sexually offensive behaviour
- Two men (**22%** of sample) had been on the receiving end of sexually offensive behaviour

Finance

- 38% of all respondents knew of incident of sexual harassment
- 25% of men knew of incident of sexual harassment
- 43% of women knew of incident of sexual harassment
- 25% of women had been on the receiving end of sexually offensive behaviour

Marketing

- 21% of all respondents knew of incident of sexual harassment
- No man reported knowing of an incident of sexual harassment
- 30% of women reported knowing of an incident of sexual harassment.
- 40 % of women had been on the receiving end of sexually offensive behaviour

The comprehensive definition of sexual harassment in the airline policy booklet includes what I have elsewhere termed sexualised environment - like lewd comments, innuendoes - which would make the securities/capital markets divisions of the bank guilty of sexual harassment everyday. All airline respondents were familiar with the airline's equal opportunities policy and this awareness of gender issues and the presence of many women managers meant that the environment was relatively unsexualised. In this sense I mean that language that may be considered disrespectful to women was rarely used (apart from swearing which I have said earlier has become relatively desexualised by everyday use); men did not make comments about women in a derogatory fashion; on the whole men were fairly cautious about how they talked in front of women. Of course, I was aware that the seniority of the women I researched may have protected them from harassment that secretaries and other lower administrative women may be subjected to.

> They may make those kind of comments to air stewardesses but not to me. (Female Senior Manager, Finance)

This indicated that open sexual comments could be made to some women but not others. Air stewardesses have been sexualised, indeed their sexuality used to promote a service suited to male requirements (Hochschild 1983; Mills 1996) and as such comments to them were fair game. In public this rarely happened to senior women managers. However, in private, the incidence of sexual harassment reported by my respondents remained stubbornly high. One of Kanter's contention's was that, as women moved up the corporate ladder, their status would wipe out any problems relating to their sex (Kanter 1977b). Although this may be true for overt derogatory comments to senior women, their status did not protect them from individual harassment. All my respondents were at fairly senior levels in the organisation and this has not prevented sexual harassment.

Breaking down the figures to show what percentage of men know of incidents of sexual harassment is one way of gauging the awareness that men may or may not have of the problem. It is obviously more likely for women to confide in women colleagues but this increases the association of the problem as a women's problem, best discussed in the Ladies cloakroom rather than on the organisational agenda and an issue for both men and women. The widest differential between men and women in their knowledge of an incident was to be found in Cargo and Finance, both traditionally male areas.

Yet the highest numbers of harassment proportionally were not to be found in the traditional male areas but in the very 'female' areas of Marketing and Human Resources. In HR the high incidence could be attributed to the awareness of the issue and what constitutes harassment, but in Marketing I was surprised. The person in HR with whom I was liaising with for my report was not surprised about the

figures in Marketing. So, although no formal method of complaint had been made, the manager in charge of equal opportunities was aware of areas in the organisation where there were specific problems. It was only after I left the airline through someone I met at a social gathering, that I learned that the director in charge of Marketing had been 'asked to leave' amidst allegations of sexual misconduct. I would not surmise from this that all the cases reported to me involved him but it made me reflect on the influence that a leader may or may not have on the conduct of his/her staff. In two particular incidents recounted to me, the women had appealed to a senior man in private to prevent the harassment continuing. If the senior man himself is a harasser this potential solution is not available. Another explanation is that the influx of women, in both these divisions, to senior levels presents a real threat to men compared, to say, the fewer numbers of women who have reached the top of other divisions. Previous studies have theorised that harassment was more likely to occur in areas where women were poorly represented and the invasion into a male culture was more obvious (Di Tomaso 1991; Collinson and Collinson 1996; Leeds TUCRIC 1983). It may be argued that this has happened in Human Resources and Marketing in a vertical way - to the more senior levels of management, traditionally the preserve of men. The only female senior manager in Cargo said to me "It's only me here so they (the men) don't mind."

Sexual Harassment in Serco

- **31%** of women knew of an incident of sexual harassment
- No man did
- **22%** of women had been on the receiving end of sexually offensive behaviour

These findings highlight the importance of differentiating between the broad interpretation of harassment, including swearing, pornographic pictures, sexual

metaphors etc. which may constitute a sexualised culture and the narrow interpretation, most commonly taken by people of individual harassment by one man to one woman.

Both knowledge and incidents of sexual harassment were less (reportedly) in the bank, where the climate in some areas was very sexualised and attitudes towards women quite hostile, than in the airline where an equal opportunities policy had been in force and awareness among men and women of gender issues was high. It may be contended that, where an atmosphere is more overtly hostile towards women, in a highly sexualised or even highly masculine environment, there is less need for more individualistic types of harassment to occur. However, the edges between sexualised interactions and sexual harassment are often extremely fuzzy (Halford, Savage and Witz 1997).

Another possibility is that the lack of awareness of the issue of sexual harassment meant that fewer women regarded certain types of behaviour as harassment than women from the airline. There was very much an acceptance of the male norm of behaviour with a 'if you can't stand the heat, get out of the kitchen', from both men and women in the bank. Men's language and aggression in some areas of the City, like trading, were linked to the job not the men. Women accepted the sexism as a professional hazard. Everyday discourse, then, may render invisible precisely those actions which feminist discourse constructs as routine instances of sexual harassment (Thomas and Kitzinger 1995).

It is also relevant to point out that the bank is much smaller than the airline and it was relatively easy to identify women in the various departments. Several women confessed their fear of a backlash and some did not fill in the questionnaire at all

because of their concern, instead telephoning me at home to talk to me. This could have led to skewed responses.

In the male dominated divisions of the airline the proportion of men knowing of sexual harassment was far lower than the proportion of women who knew. Here, in the traditional last bastion of professional male workplaces, the City, no man professes to have heard of any case of sexual harassment. Despite some well publicised cases, like the sacking of three traders from Goldman Sachs for harassment of a secretary, the men in my case study did not acknowledge the possibility of its existence in their organisation at all. It may be that most men in the City are unaware of the way many of them routinely harass women in their everyday conversations and behaviour. As Harlow, Hearn and Parkin (1995) note, their din and noise are like a backdrop of harassment that never stops.

As mentioned above, the swearing and language that occurred Securities were not considered harassment. The cases of harassment which were recounted to me consisted of individual, 'private' harassment. Several women in both case studies went on to blame themselves for not 'handling the situation properly'. This corresponds to Collinson and Collinson's work which showed that women felt it their responsibility to control men in the office (1996). A couple of incidents at the bank had occurred in the relatively unsexualised, but highly male gendered, corporate finance division. One particularly pernicious case involved a senior director, who repeatedly touched a young woman, made suggestive comments to her, used bad language and never left her alone. She had to ask another senior director to deal with it quietly, which he did. Appealing to another senior man seemed to be the only solution apart from leaving.

CONCLUSION

Sexual harassment

It is important to locate sexual harassment in a wider body of theory on women's oppression in organisations and not as isolated organisational incidents. As MacKinnon put it, sexual harassment is not just endemic, it is pandemic (1979). I am including it as part of organisational culture and construing organisational culture as a means of patriarchal control strategy. I think it may be helpful to distinguish between the narrow and the broad interpretation of sexual harassment, when writing about it, because although some of the more public cases of individual harassment of one woman have occurred in organisations where male sexuality is very overtly used by men to bond and exclude women e.g. police force, armed services and firefighters, I found a high incidence of the narrow interpretation occurring in areas where the sexual temperature of the environment appeared to be more neutral. Both interpretations of it can be conceptualised as being part of an organisation's culture. I include the narrow interpretation of individual (private) harassment as part of the culture because the conditions in which it is allowed to continue unchecked determine its existence, as opposed to the odd stray man who has a personal problem. The broader version may be found in overtly sexualised cultures and may not be construed by employees as harassment.

Society's negative attitude towards female sexuality ensures that in some way the harassed woman will feel responsible for the attention she is receiving. In managerial situations, where women are busy trying to blend in and deflect sexual attention, the last thing they want to do is attract attention by reporting incidents of harassment, thus, the vast majority of sexual harassment cases go unreported in the workplace. None of my respondents reported any incident although in 88% of the cases the

harassment occurred more than once. The cultural conditions, which made reporting the incidents worse than the harassment itself are an indicator of the extent to which women are not accommodated within the organisation. My findings show that sexual harassment, even in the airline which had a very broad definition of it and broadcast that it was unacceptable, was frequent. The fact that no one had reported any incident shows that making policy statements just is not enough. It would have been interesting to follow up some of the questionnaires but that would have broken my bargain of guaranteeing anonymity. I wanted to ask why they had not reported any incident. The stigma of bringing a case has been well documented in the press as the woman herself and her sexuality is put on trial. Very often the case involves a more senior man making it difficult to report. The risk of being labelled a trouble maker may also prevent any action. It has also been suggested that women are unwilling to associate themselves with a concept which is closely tied to feminism (Cairns 1997). In one frank discussion with a bank employee she said

> I was new, young and a foreigner. He was older, more senior and important. The last thing I wanted was to have my name tarnished. I'd have had to leave the bank. So I got my boss, who was very protective of me, to have a word and that worked. (Female Manager, bank)

Stories of individual targeting of one woman by one man were recognised, by all the respondents with whom I discussed it, as harassment. The research in some ways demanded that I separated out sexual harassment from a sexualised culture although I acknowledge that many aspects of a sexualised culture would be included in a broad definition of sexual harassment. I have not collapsed sexual harassment into sexuality and acknowledge there are other aspects of sexuality within organisations - mutual attractions between workers, but I do not think that this aspect of sexuality warrants too much particularly feminist attention. Individual harassment I have

conceptualised separately. There can also be sexualised cultures, which may or may not be misogynistic. Sexual harassment may take place in areas which do not appear to be overtly sexualised at all.

Pleasurable aspects

Both Pringle and Cockburn have argued for a more sophisticated theory on sexuality in organisations, advocating the pleasurable aspects for women, as well as the painful.

Yes, many of the men and women seemed to enjoy working together, and not necessarily because of a sexual element. Yes, there probably was flirting, attraction and dating, just like in any other mixed sex setting. Like Cockburn, I found quite a lot of marriages that were made at work and, for women earning this amount of money, I do not consider them to have been coerced, however indirectly into marriage (cf. Adkins 1995).

Affairs were alluded to and I found, quite by accident, that I interviewed both the man and the woman at the heart of the latest scandal in the finance department in the airline. He had recently left his wife for this woman, who was not British and had only been working at the airline for one year. However much an organisation may try to discourage relationships between employees, many people do find partners at work (Cockburn 1991). Burrell bemoans the lack of this kind of relationship and yet they go on everywhere, all the time. But to extrapolate from the fact that men and women may enjoy relationships at work to the suggestion that there may be ways in which "sexual pleasure might be used to disrupt rationality and to empower women" (Cockburn 1991 p.159) is mistaken.

I would not even include this aspect of sexuality in my definition of sexualised culture. There is, of course, a sexual aspect of their relationship but not one that is necessarily overt at work. This expression of sexuality, privately, is neither subversive nor disruptive. If there was some compromise in work in the office or a block in communications because of split loyalties, then it could be disruptive. But I do not hold it be either disadvantageous or advantageous to women in an organisation.

Affairs with married people put workmates in compromising positions and are less easily accommodated. One man I knew was told that he would be made a partner in stockbroking firm on the condition that he gave up his affair with the receptionist, or that she left. She left. Certainly some organisations have policies requiring one or other partner to leave. I do not, however, think that this evidence suggests that women can subvert gender relations at work through sexuality. The comments I got from women managers, 'If you flirt you are dead', and 'If you come one all womanly, you are finished', did not attest to evidence that women may benefit in any way from an expression of their sexuality.

The Cabin Services was in some ways a 'sexy' division yet was certainly, from my point of view as a woman, a very comfortable place to be. No one stared at you, you felt as though you could be dressed up to the nines and not feel self-conscious (albeit the pilots were located in the same building and had a predatory air about them). Air travel has always been perceived as glamorous and stewardesses traditionally were chosen for their model looks. Although now the age barriers and height and figure restrictions have been removed most stewardesses are well groomed and made up. So, as well as the presence of homosexual men - and I was told of two lesbian managers who were accepted openly - the history of employing

glamorous women must have influenced the culture too. The broadening of the pool from which cabin crew are recruited has led to a cosmopolitan feel to the Compass Centre as very often the airline will recruit people who speak different languages from their country of origin so that they can work on those routes which require their language. The Compass Centre is an exciting modern building, all blue glass with a huge atrium. We have here, in some respects, a sexualised culture yet because it is not predominatantly heterosexual it doesn't seem oppressive to women in as much as the focus isn't on them. Even so, individual harassment of women still goes on. So a sexualised culture may not in itself be oppressive to women. Is it possible to have a heterosexual environment which was as accomodating of all sexualities and not oppressive?

The overt hetero-sexualisation of a culture can be readily identified by those who visit it or inhabit it. The inhabitors most probably do not call it sexual, let alone harassing to women, they tended to refer to it as very masculine or macho, like Cargo. They seemed impervious to the implicit disrespect of these cultures towards women. Thomas has discussed some of the reasons for this ' normalising ' of sexual harassment by both men and women (Thomas and Kitzinger 1997)

A more materialist approach

Evidence and experience suggest that it is male sexuality which is at work in organisations. Collinson and Collinson (1989, 1996) illustrate the ways in which this male sexual discourse is used to try to exclude and subordinate women, and their findings support Di Tomaso's argument that, where women enter male dominated areas, men may use sexuality to maintain their dominant position (1989). Di Tomaso found that women were more likely to be subjected to sexual harassment in areas of

male dominated work. Collinson and Collinson's findings suggest that men's sexuality and organisational power are inextricably linked. This evidence, they say, provides some support for the argument that a structure of patriarchy, in addition to the capitalist pressure to commodify and control labour, is a necessary analytical prerequisite for the understanding of how power and sexuality are reproduced in organisations. Where do these factual and empirical accounts of male sexual domination in organisations fit into an eroticised sociology, envisaged by Burrell (1992)?

The ubiquity of male power, through sexuality and other means, suggests the need for the concept of patriarchy to be a necessary tool of analysis of gender in organisations. Is there any reason why we should not maintain this structuralist underpinning of pre-discursive power relations, yet use the concept of discourse to illustrate the complex and subtle ways in which this dominant power is manifested?

The approach of male sexuality acting as a resource on which men may draw is helpful, and one I want to use. Sexuality is too often linked with women to be left without an agent or even in the hands of organisation. Women arrive on the scene, which is immediately sexualised, yet it is male sexuality which pervades the workplace, with or without the presence of women (Collinson and Collinson 1989). Where a male heterosexuality was not dominant, where it was not available as a resource, the culture was more relaxing for women who were able to be more expressive of their own sexuality. We see from the research the myriad of ways in which men use sexuality to put women down, describing a woman manager as sexy after she clinched a deal, the pressure of dressing down sexuality for women managers, the reminders all the time that women are only sexual objects, which deflects from the work they are doing (Rigg and Sparrow 1994; Sheppard 1989).

I reiterate the dangers of focusing too much on sexuality when investigating gender relations in organisations. The sexuality concerned is male defined, often assuming an inherent sexual drive on the part of men and women that some would question, and suggests an equal opportunity on the part of men and women to engage in a discourse which, in reality, is denied by the domination of women by men. There are many other ways in which men exclude women, socially, through friendships, sponsors, clubs, sports activities, anti-social hours which do not fit easily into a sexuality paradigm. I would prefer to fit sexuality into a feminist analysis, rather than accommodating the idea of male domination through a focus on sexuality. In this way I include sexuality in my constituents of organisational culture, and my research focuses on sexualised cultures and sexual harassment.

This is an empirical study which shows, like others before it, that it is primarily men who sexually harass women in the workplace. It is also contended that men construct workplace cultures, characterised by explicit and predatory sexual discourses that derogate and undermine women (Willis 1977; Cockburn 1983; Collinson 1992). Where this is outlawed by the organisation harassment may take the more individualised form, targeting one woman at a time. From my research sexual harassment takes place in varying forms, regardless of the segregation/non-segregation of the women concerned (Gherardi 1995). It takes place in offices I would not describe as sexualised at all. A sexualised harassing culture may act as a means of closure to women because of the discomfort of working in that kind of environment. Individualised harassment which is allowed to go unreported leads to the individual women themselves often having to leave.

CHAPTER NINE
CONCLUSION

INTRODUCTION

I have shown that different constituents of culture may exclude women in different ways, and in different areas even when a strong equal opportunities policy exists. The glass in the so-called glass ceiling is in fact molten glass, before it is blown or moulded. Its malleable properties are far more fitting as an image to the subtle and adaptable cultural resistance, than the stable properties of solid glass. Cultural resistance by men, which may or may not be unconscious, adapts to the prevailing environment, and becomes more subtle as overt discrimination is outlawed. Men may draw on different resources like time, sexuality, homosociability and ideologies of work to distinguish themselves from women and/or marginalise and exclude women. Leadership emerges as a vital influence of organisational culture and its impact on gender in organisations.

The findings of each chapter are discussed separately and I continue with a discussion on the theoretical implications. I will show how the different concepts of power illuminate and contribute to this analysis, and that an adequate definition of organisational culture is vital for its exclusionary characteristics to be identified. I begin with a summary of the conclusion from each chapter.

GENDER AWARENESS

My findings show that an effort to create a culture of equality, where equal opportunities are strongly backed by senior management, creates a better working

environment for women. A historically male culture, like the bank which then denies gender difference, and operates under free market mechanisms, masks gender inequality and is exclusionary to women. In the airline, women's grievances were channelled through the discourse of equal opportunities, and were accepted up to a certain point as organisational issues. In the bank there was no such available discourse and women's grievances were individualised. The hegemonic discourses of biological and psychological difference prevailed in the bank to justify the scarcity of women and this was accepted by many of the women themselves. A culture which represents women as 'naturally' wanting to be at home or 'exceptional' to work in certain areas - like corporate finance, or at senior levels or combining work and family - is exclusionary to women. The role of leadership emerged from this chapter as an important factor. Leadership sets limits to the prevailing discourses available to an organisation's employees.

How gender aware or in what ways was gender recognised by the organisation and its employees? I compared the two organisations, the first of which was overtly gender aware with a highly developed equal opportunities policy and the employer of many women managers and the second which has so far ignored gender issues. I identified the different discourses through which both men and women articulated their thoughts on women in the organisation. In the airline, a discourse of equal opportunities prevailed, endorsed and indeed actively promoted by top management. Whatever privately they thought men talked within this discourse and were enthusiastic and supportive of women managers. This was born out by the statistical data - all respondents were aware of the airline EO policy, 68% of male respondents thought that women managers had a positive effect on the workplace compared to 94% of female respondents.

The women managers were all aware of gender issues and discussed their difficulties through the discourse of equal opportunities. They had certain expectations of how they were treated and were quick to recognise any sexist behaviour - 34% reported feeling unwelcome in an area of the organisation and 24% said they felt they had been excluded from a job because of their gender. There were many comments in the questionnaire complaining that the company should act more rather than talk about equal opportunities. A feminist discourse which may perhaps problematise men, masculinity and the structure of work was however not available to them and indeed, as I have shown, awareness of gender issues did not extend to feeling confident enough to report incidents of sexual harassment. Running concurrently alongside the equal opportunities discourse were other discourses on the 'competing practical considerations theme' around childcare and maternity (Wetherell, Stiven and Potter 1987). Respondents spoke about equality through both these discourses without any apparent recognition of the contradiction implicit in them.

In the bank, however, the respondents had no recourse to an equal opportunities discourse and any difficulties in women's career paths were individualised. Working practices and the treatment of women remained totally unchallenged. The discourse of superwoman was invoked frequently, marking out the successful women in the bank as exceptional. Women themselves articulated concerns by discussing the difficulty of promotion, accepting as a fact of life that it was harder for a woman to be promoted. The discourse of biologism and women's inevitable maternity was still strong and, because there was little history of working mothers, was used as a reason for being wary of employing women who might then leave. This discourse did not prevail in the airline because the majority of women returned to work after childbirth. The men in the bank displayed an astonishing lack of awareness to any gender issues resulting in a gender blind approach which, combined with the

biological and psychological discourses, meant that obstacles for women managers were ignored, or individualised and even trivialised.

I want to argue here that these different discourses do not develop by accident, that there is in effect some design behind them which hints at an agency which is not merely constituted by these discourses. The equal opportunities discourse at the airline was introduced by senior management for a number of reasons, both business and social justice, and employees were then educated to accept the policies. Whilst senior management remain committed to it, this discourse will be dominant for the articulation of women's needs and concerns in the organisation. Some of the details may change with some issues being raised and pushed through by women in the organisation themselves, evidenced by the existence of the team groups who were required to listen to concerns and report in all divisions of the airline, but ultimately the parameters of the discourse are set by top management. So, for example, sexual harassment, a serious concern for women at work and a specifically feminist-named behaviour, went unreported throughout the organisation, presumably because women felt they had more to lose by reporting it than ignoring it. Senior management had failed to address the lingering and pernicious patriarchal attitudes that construct women as being responsible for any unwanted sexual attention they may receive. One woman said to me, "I don't see how the airline can be expected to achieve more than outside society in its attitudes to women."

However much the practice of sexual harassment is criticised in terms of being obstructive to good business, women know that it is about more than that. We may perhaps imagine a time when a feminist informed management really outlawed the practice of harassment. Whilst accepting that senior management themselves act and speak through discourses available to them, I want to emphasise the point that

discourses become dominant because someone or some people have the power to make them so.

How the organisation views women, their place in society and at work is crucial to how women progress in organisations. In the bank there had been no pressure, either internal or external, to examine its policies on employing women. The potential power of women joining together is lost when difficulties are articulated through individualised, biologised and/or psychologised discourses. This may not prevent a few individuals progressing on their own merit, but it is hard to see how the numbers of women can be dramatically increased without some kind of equal opportunity policy. Such is the power of hegemonic culture that the history of men both generally, and specifically in the City, fighting to keep women out of particular workplaces is never alluded to (there was a bitter battle to keep women off the Stock Exchange floor and from being partners in stockbrokers, indeed they only acquiesced and allowed them in 1973).

MANAGEMENT STYLE

Management style, or how the business of the organisations is conducted, is a major part of the organisation's culture. Indeed, it is often equated with culture (Handy 1985). An ongoing debate in the women in management literature focuses on women's different ways of managing and whether this may contribute to their failure to progress in organisations. More recently debates have moved to suggest that women's difference may be an attribute to management in the more service and communication centred nineties. My findings show that women themselves thought they managed differently and better than men. Their own perceived different ways of managing, however, could not be cited as reasons for their lack of progress for in

the bank, particularly, the men acknowledged no such difference, even the men in a division headed by a woman, SIM. In the airline there was a statistically significant difference between the divisions, with only 50% of respondents from Cabin Services saying women managed differently compared with 80% from Cargo and 87% from Human Resources. I believe that this was due to the very person centred management style of the Cabin Services division.

The openness of Cabin Services management had important repercussions. The new Breakthrough campaign was accompanied by management training, aiming to make people more aware and encouraging them to 'bring themselves to work'. The psychic split involved in leaving one person behind to become another at work has been felt particularly hard by women (Davidson and Cooper 1983). McDowell has reported that many of her women referred to a real 'me' that had been left at home (McDowell 1997). I think people do have a sense of who they are, and certainly where they feel comfortable. In Cabin Services the open way of managing meant that women were more able to be themselves at work and this, perhaps, resulted in better relations between men and women and a higher percentage of women saying that the airline was providing a culture which nurtured women than in any other division. Whilst the women found bringing themselves into work easier, men could do it too. The senior men in Cabin Services managed in a very 'feminine' way, in as much as the emphasis was on people, communication and listening. This style was fostered by the leader because it was felt to be the best way of managing the cabin crew. It appears though that 'feminine' skills in women are considered natural attributes and, hence, not overtly recognised or rewarded but, in men, these 'feminine' skills are recognised (Adkins and Lury 1996).

I found business requirements continually cross cutting any coherent pattern of male/ female management styles. Instead of male and female styles, I drew out the distinction of task-centred and people-centred as a way of describing the two styles, and I argue that both men and women may adopt either style. I believe it is women's lack of status in society which has led to the general opinion that they do not make good leaders, rather than any of the skills/styles they may have or lack. The danger of focusing on male/female styles is apparent from the research which shows that men may invest in a feminine style and still be valorised as good leaders, whereas when women invest in a more masculine style they are viewed with suspicion and mistrust, as losing their femininity.

My findings do not support the argument that large numbers of women in a division make it more likely that a feminine style is favoured. I found the business goals of the divisions and the leadership to be more relevant to the style of management adopted than the gender composition. As a large service orientated business, the airline 's most important management goal was valuing the customer and there was a lot of emphasis in management on good communication, openness and providing a good service. The Putting People First Campaign of the eighties harnessed traditional female attributes to provide a management which was complementary to their premier goal of caring for the customer. One of the goals of the campaign was that the carers had to be caringly managed and this was to filter throughout the airline. Obviously, as the front line of the organisation, Cabin Services felt this campaign more than other divisions. However, the recent airline management campaign emphasising heroism may require a return to more masculine traits and this may marginalise women. Furthermore, the data showed that the feminine associated skills were less likely to be found in the more senior women, which confirmed my earlier thoughts that women's traditional characteristics may be being

appropriated for particular kinds of management skills considered useful for service industries, rather than that women themselves were being more valued.

In the bank a much more traditional masculine style prevailed which resulted in any successful woman being called a 'tough cookie'. The real toughness required was dealing with the male environment rather than conducting the business of investment. Certainly the more elite positions were said to require a 'toughness' which was not thought necessary for, say, a position as fund manager. This labelling of skills with a masculine bias may act to deter the recruitment of women.

The shift in recent years towards Human Resource models of management may have benefited women managers. However, feminists should view with caution any valorisation of 'natural' feminine qualities as these may be 1) appropriated in the form of emotional labour in certain types of management work and/or 2) colonised by men who may require them in the certain market conditions too. The problem for most women in my survey was not that they felt they lacked the requisite qualities that made up a good manager but rather they felt they were better managers, and had a better bundle of skills than men but that these were not recognised or valued in most parts of the organisation. Women also felt they were less status conscious and less political than men. They felt that these aspects of management were rewarded although they had nothing to do with good management. The women managers in my survey, then, have contributed to the critique of masculinity and management. They questioned the emphasis on attributes like status, visibility and networking which are tied up with the importance of work to men's identity.

So management style in this study was not in itself an indicator of women's unsuitability for senior management. However, the naturalisation and hence lack of

recognition of women's skills, combined with prevailing management's focus on status, visibility and networking, could be construed as a form of closure to women managers, particularly at senior levels.

TIME MANAGEMENT

This aspect of culture has been popularised and been studied with reference to its impact on women at work (Burns 1995) and has been the subject of media interest, yet it has not been theorised as part of organisational culture. I include it in culture and show how it acts to close off elite areas of work to women with families. Long hours may be introduced to extract the maximum amount of work from individuals and hence increase the rate of employee productivity. I found evidence of this in the airline where increased hours went hand in hand with delayering of management. The comment from a MG, "If I go home at 5.30pm, I'm going to be less productive than someone who goes home at 7.30 pm" shows how, once established, a long working day quickly becomes the norm without any necessity for formal ascription.

I developed the notion of time being a resource, drawing on the work of Buswell and Jenkins (1994). My evidence corresponds to their hypothesis that men have more time, made available to them by women, and it can be used as a patriarchal strategy to exclude women. In the bank the fund management division and the securities division by and large worked regular hours with the former starting later than the latter. However, the securities division was in the process of change and the new chief executive was increasing the working day in order to get maximum work out of his teams, saying "they get paid bloody well, so they can work for it." This was a gender blind strategy but of course it was far harder for the only woman in the division with a child. In the elite corporate finance division the long hours served

as a means of competition and as a measure of suitability, staying power and the irregularity of the hours made it extremely anti-family. Needing to be tough, as I was constantly being told a corporate finance executive had to be, could almost be reduced to the ability to work crazy hours, and forsake any life at home - a new work characteristic which, unsurprisingly, more men than women are able and willing to offer.

In the airline there was some evidence that women with children worked shorter hours than women without. In the open ended question on ways in which the culture of the organisation might be improved for women, many asked for an end to the long hours culture, an increase in availability of flexitime and part-time work for managers. This, together with my qualitative data, showed that working mothers were anxious to spend more time at home, in contrast to Hochschild's recent work on the 'time bind' which suggested that women were reluctant to spend more time at home as it represented a place fraught with tensions, difficulties and offered little to women in value and self esteem. My findings, however, showed that the small take-up of family friendly policies at the airline was due to the prevailing attitude that part- time work for managers meant second rate work. I was repeatedly told that working part-time meant working on temporary projects and being left out on the margins. It was certainly associated with relinquishing power. There is an implicit threat in a successful part-timer, because it calls into question the purpose of the extremely long hours that everyone else works. There was one successful part-time manager in marketing, who had been extremely high profile and established herself as a fast tracker before having children in her mid thirties and deciding to go part time. Her visibility and her years of networking, it seemed to me, ensured that she had not been marginalised. It is the negative value associated with part time work which prevents women from taking it up, not because they do not want to be at

home more. Part-time for the women in my study often meant little more than a normal working day of eight hours. Women with no children were just as prepared to work the same long hours as men.

In both organisations senior management worked on average one hour longer than other managers. There was almost a requirement of omnipresence for senior managers, which in turn set the standards for the managers who worked for them. It is not surprising then that far fewer senior women had children than did men. There is then a convergence of this new masculinity with the interests of the organisation as this aspect of culture is readily manipulated by management. Patriarchal interests, where men are more likely to be able to work long hours which are required for the most elite and most senior jobs because they do not carry primary responsibility at home, converge with business interests in that people supposedly work longer and produce more. I suggest that the requirement and, indeed, expectation of working long hours for certain elite jobs and senior management acts a means of closure to exclude women because far fewer women than men are able to comply.

PUBLIC/PRIVATE

The public/private divide is now acknowledged as being of pivotal importance to the success or not of women in the workplace (Lewis and Lewis 1996; Halford, Savage and Witz 1997). I conceptualise this work ideology as part of an organisation's culture. What is and is not considered 'work' pervades a culture, influencing expectations of work performance and the public/private or home/work divide is of course a gendered one. The unspoken understanding that men 's primary realm is the workplace and women's the home allows the long hours cultures to go unchallenged.

My research develops Massey's contention that whilst home is invaded by work, the traffic is one way. A senior woman manager trundling into the office weighed down by several Tesco bags would be considered an unseemly sight, because it calls into mind that other side of life which belongs elsewhere. In the same way that children and illness do not belong in the office, neither do bags of the weekly shop. My findings show that it is almost always women who take responsibility for the home, and manage this dual burden. I have argued that the persistence of this dualism has a double negative effect on women managers.

The reality of the dual burden which on the whole goes unchallenged, makes it harder for women to work in the same capacity as men. The representations of women that the dualism produces are used against women whether they have children or not. Thus, in the bank, the biological discourse of the inevitability of maternity which would most probably mean a woman leaving, counted heavily against all women of child bearing age. Only exceptional women could manage to do both roles well. In the airline there was recognition of maternity and certain divisions were fairly accommodating of home life (Human Resources, Cabin Services) but there was tacit understanding that these only became issues if there was an insurmountable problem i.e. nanny was ill, husband had left home etc. The daily grind of doing it all went unnoticed in everyday work life, like the women getting up at 4am in order to do their reports because they wanted to see their children in evenings etc. Several senior women told me point blank that they would be unable to do their jobs with children.

The home/work divide serves to disguise and even undermine the amount of work that is done in a home to keep it operating. Acknowledging it would reveal how the unpaid for work at home enables men to work the hours and expend the energy they

do in paid work. Men in the airline were more aware of the debt they owed their wives who bought their children up single handedly, bought their godchildren their birthday presents, did their laundry, organised their dinner parties and looked presentable at corporate dinners, but they were less ready to acknowledge that the women they worked with may have to do nearly as much themselves when they got home.

What constitutes work, where it belongs and who does it are often taken for granted cultural values which are embedded in society and organisational life. These assumptions need to be prized open and reconsidered if women are to be able to take their place alongside men in the workplace. As part of an organisation' s culture the public/private discourse can perpetuate the reality of a dual burden for women and continue to act as a rationale which makes it more fitting that men dominate senior organisational life than women, who in the back of many men's minds really belong somewhere else. In this way it can be seen to contribute to closure to women managers who carry home responsibilities.

INFORMAL SOCIALISING

I analysed this concept by breaking it down into the following activities,informal socialising with clients or colleagues, mentoring, corporate entertaining and networking .

What was shown in this chapter? Firstly I found evidence that it is exclusion of women, not just tokens (Kanter 1977a), which occurs through informal networking and socialising. I have tried to flesh out the concept of men's club (Coe 1992) and found just how intangible and, at times, invisible it is, which of course is its power. I

found it to be very important in both organisations but in different ways. In the airline political networking was rife but informal socialising was only important at senior levels and in the bank there was much more informal socialising throughout the organisation, much of this excluding directly or indirectly women.

Although informal socialising only became a more important part of the airline's culture at a senior level, 33% of all male and female respondents cited the existence of a men's club as being a barrier to their career. The ability to network was considered vital to progress up the career ladder and I found plenty of evidence of political manoeuvring, a common phenomenon in a large bureaucratic organisation. The airline women felt generally that they did not do enough networking but they also felt they were not as status driven as men in the organisation. This corresponds with my findings on management style. The airline industry has a history of freemasonry and this still exists throughout the organisation, particularly in the Cargo division. Although freemasonry specifically excludes women, there had been no campaign to stamp it out as discriminatory even though it is acknowledged that freemasons have a duty to help one another out, which may interfere in business interests. The informal life of the airline, apart from playing in the company's sports clubs, was invisible to an outside researcher and hard to identify. Yet its power was obviously felt by the numbers who cited it as a barrier to their career.

Informal socialising was an important part of the organisational culture throughout the bank at all levels although women thought it was less important to socialise with clients than men did. A much bigger percentage of women (63%) than men (36%) said that their informal socialising was constrained by domestic responsibilities. It was more important to socialise with clients in the broking division (SSEC) because they are sellers of a service and need to persuade their clients to buy. It was easier to

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withdraw from social activities on the fund management side who tend to be invited out by brokers from other companies.

The use of masculinist activities e.g. shooting, fishing, paintballing and male sports as well as sexual entertainment to entertain clients had the effect of either excluding women completely or including them and then marginalising them. The more overt informal life of the City is apparent for most to see and is viewed by those who work there as part of the job. I argued that most recruits are already part of this club on entry into the City by dint of their education and background. Being a woman poses certain problems, but there are enough aspects of informal life for women to join in with something e.g. lunches and drinks after work, which perhaps enables them to turn a blind eye to the more sexist places and practices that exist, like the City Circle, where the waitresses wear little and is still a favourite haunt in the City.

There was some evidence of women networking among themselves, but this had more the effect of a support group than a method for career furtherance. Formal mentoring schemes, often promoted in the US, were considered pretty useless in the airline as it was agreed that successful mentoring was about personalities and could not be formalised. This may not augur well for young women who are more unlikely to be 'championed' by men than are young men. The more equality driven culture of the airline meant that mentoring of a woman by a man was more common and did not necessarily raise eyebrows and the successful women in the airline were all avid networkers who had very close alliances with the Chief Executive. Another way of looking at mentoring was 'having a good boss', a reason given to me by many women who had done well in both the organisations. This emphasises the importance of leadership.

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Informal life at work is about cementing relationships both inside and outside the organisation. It is not just about establishing a trust relationship although many consider that loyalty in clients can be bought, it is also about furthering contacts and creating power bases. My data shows that women are not as interested in this mode of behaviour and would prefer to do their job and be judged on it, than expend energy on manoeuvres to help them in the future.

Men's socialising has always specifically excluded women in the past and I think that whether occurring in a work environment and therefore explained as necessary to that work, or occurring outside it, the purpose is the same - the need for men to shore up their masculinity by excluding women.

My evidence suggests then that informal socialising may act as a means of closure at particular instances, through the promotion of explicitly masculinist activities like male sports, freemasonry, sexual entertainment and particularly at the more senior levels of management, where informal entertaining with other senior managers and their wives is far more problematic for senior women managers, whether they are single or have partners. Managers need time to socialise and this is harder for women with families, as evidenced by the fact that more women than men felt constrained by domestic responsibilities. The other side of informal life I analysed was the political networking which was prevalent in the airline. Women did not do as much networking as men and this may inhibit their progress.

SEXUALITY

My data on sexual harassment necessitated the division of the concept into two, the narrow interpretation and the broad interpretation. When speaking about harassment

the women interviewees referred to the narrow definition, individual harassment by one man. The broader definition which was one reflected in the airline's equal opportunity policy and embraced language, gestures, comments was referred to by respondents as male culture or macho environment but not harassment. I found evidence of high numbers of sexual harassment throughout the airline, which I found surprising given the seniority of the women involved. The two divisions which had the most harassment incidents reported to me were Marketing and Human Resources. These divisions had equal numbers of female and male managers and neither division was in any way macho or sexualised. My contention is that the very large numbers of women at a senior level in these divisions may be the reason for the harassment. Corresponding to the findings that women are more likely to be harassed in male dominated occupations (Collinson and Collinson 1989), women breaking into senior levels of management in large numbers precipitates outbreaks of individualised harassment. I also contend that where the prevailing culture is in no way harassing, individual harassment is just as likely or perhaps more likely to occur. Where the environment is more overtly sexualised in an oppressive way, women may be warned off from the start. I justify the inclusion of the narrow case of sexual harassment in my definition of organisational culture because the conditions which prevail allowed all cases in my sample to go unreported.

Juxtaposing my data on the high levels of harassment against the current debates about organisational sexuality, I argue that a materialist notion of sexuality is required when investigating sexuality in the workplace. Designating sexuality as merely cultural (Butler 1989) and constituted through discourse is inadequate in the face of persistent sexual harassment of women. Sexual harassment is an example of the power of men over women's lives (Thomas and Kitzinger 1997) and may be seen as one resource men may draw on to oppress or harass women. In Cabin Services,

without the resource of male dominated heterosexuality, I argue that the culture was a more comfortable one for women. The recent attempts to anchor back the cultural to the material, by way of the body or embodiment, is evidence of the requirement to retain some sense of material when talking about sexuality. The fear of biologism being used against women should not result in a wholesale abandonment of biological aspects of sexuality.

My data shows the dangers of advocating resistance to male power in organisations through sexuality. I found evidence, like Cockburn (1991), of relationships made at work but in no way would I label this as subversive or disruptive. The call for more eroticism and open sexuality at work is equally mistaken. I found like others (Collinson and Collinson 1989) that it is male sexuality which is at work and which women have the task of managing to avoid unwanted attention - 'I didn't handle it very well' - as quite a high proportion of women managers in the relatively unsexualised environment of the airline dressed so as to avoid sexual attention.

THEORETICAL IMPLICATIONS

Feminist Theory

In this section I want to explore some of the theoretical implications of my research. The very fact of doing feminist research is predicated on the basis that there is a category of women on whose behalf the writer is making some kind of generalisation. I have argued throughout this piece of research that it is important to retain the concept of women as an identity. Some current feminist theory with its emphasis on sexualities and identities is fairly abstract and, indeed, I believe there is a wide gap between empirical work, grass roots work in the form of overseas

development, education, training, support for domestic violence survivors etc etc and current theory, which needs to be filled. Whilst intellectually stimulating, some of the current debates about multiple sexualities and identities need to be grounded in a more specifically feminist paradigm. It seems almost paradoxical that we have returned again to debates about sexuality and our bodies, topics which were a central feature of early second wave feminism. I conclude on the basis of my research that the sexuality paradigm is inappropriate for an analysis of gender and organisations. Sexuality, as one aspect of human nature, needs to be theorised separately from gender. My research findings in Cabin Services, where the prevailing sexuality was not necessarily heterosexuality highlights the importance of this. I use the term sex in a biological sense to refer to anatomical difference, men and women. It is in this sense that sex is rooted in biology not culture. I think that some aspects of sexuality are also rooted in biology. Assigning everything to culture because of the fear of essentialism and the negative overtones for women does nothing to change the position of women in society. I maintain that the concept of patriarchy is vital in an investigation into gender relations. It conveys men's interests but does not have to be a totalising concept, meaning every single man benefits from it, but that a system exists in which men may dominate women (Walby 1990).

Organisational culture

I hope to have highlighted some of the more subtle nuances of organisational culture, but this is not meant to be an exhaustive account or a definitive list of cultural constituents which are gendered. I believe it is the first definition to make gender and sexuality core constituents of organisational culture. My operational definition worked reasonably well although there were many overlaps in practice. By defining the gendered nature of organisational culture and analysing its impact on

women managers, this research illustrates the importance of power, which has been neglected in most of the literature. Seeing culture as practice, as a process and seeing the way it can act as a means of resistance makes some sense of agency imperative. Whilst cultural practices have been named as being important for revealing hitherto hidden aspects of working women's lives (Thomas 1996; Green and Cassell 1996) there had been little work showing that they may be used as a means of resistance by men to women's equality in organisations (Cockburn 1991) Because the means are cultural they are not less real but the power relations are harder to identify because of the use of hegemony.

Conceptualising organisational culture as a web of interwoven discourses, which permeate the entire organisation (Thomas 1996) is useful, as long as we acknowledge the powers which ultimately determine which discourses prevail (see below). My research shows that the postmodern approach of seeing organisational culture as arbitrary and a text to be read is unrealistic and unhelpful. The link between the business needs of the organisation and its culture is far too tangible to allow culture to be a free floating text to be read at will. There is nothing arbitrary about the cultural resistance my findings show occurs in various sections of the organisations. In support of the managerialist school, certain aspects of culture can be managed. Top management promoted an equality culture in Airco which did not exist ten years ago. Whilst not perfect, the culture has changed, despite pockets of resistance.

The importance of power in work life emerged at each stage of the study. No one theory fitted the many aspects of power to be found in organisational life so I have taken a number of different concepts which I think are the most suitable in exploring the particular power relations I have found.

The power of closure

What my results show is that different gendered aspects of organisational culture may constitute a kind of exclusionary strategy in the form of closure. Discussion at the end of a session at a recent Gender, Work and Organisation conference (January 1998, UMIST Manchester) focused on the need to identify the means of resistance that were used to prevent women fulfilling their potential in organisational life and I would place my research as part of that process. Men's resistance to women participating in the public sphere has taken many forms over the years (Walby 1986; 1990; Witz 1990; Cockburn 1986, 1991).

Closure requires power, in credential terms the power to determine what credentials are required, and in cultural terms the power to determine the dominant culture. Whilst adopting a broader concept of closure than has previously been used, I do not restrict my view of power to a purely Weberian one. A Foucauldian concept of power is inadequate here as closure also requires agency and I would argue a subject which acts purposely. This is not to argue that all outcomes of power are consciously thought out acts but we need to retain some concept of responsibility, and that entails some connection between consciousness and subject, between subject and act, between subject and speech which a Foucauldian framework denies us. Neither need a top down approach to power mean that there is no resistance on the part of women, or indeed other subjugated persons. The resisting aspects of power can be usefully theorised using Gramsci's theory of hegemony (Gramsci 1971).

The power in hegemony

Maintaining cultural authority requires work and I find the concept of hegemony useful in illustrating the processural and active element of culture and the ways in which a culture becomes dominant whilst changing and indeed adapting to the demands of subordinate groups. That men as a group benefit from the closure effects of organisational culture illustrates that we still need the concepts of group interests and, hence, the defense of the term patriarchy and patriarchal interests. In the same vein the category of women needs to be maintained. Many of the women in my study did not see themselves as dominated or oppressed. They were well educated, well paid and successful in their own fields. Their complicity in many forms of sexism can be explained by the existence of hegemonic patriarchal culture.

An example of hegemonic discourse is the naturalisation of the public/private divide which enables it to go unchallenged by most men and women. Patriarchal hegemony maintains the dominant heterosexual discourse of sexuality whereby any display of female sexuality is constructed as sexual availability. It ensures that women accept as natural the inevitability of men's sex drive in the workplace and see the management of men's sexuality as their responsibility. Hegemony may help explain women's inability to see sexual harassment as about power, their unwillingness to see the behaviour of men as being anti-women, women's desire to maintain status quo and not be labelled trouble makers. This is not the same as power over or treating women as dupes - we are all duped to some extent by cultural authority eg power of advertising. Nor is it the same as Foucault's concept of power, resistance and culture, in which women resist at various points throughout the seams. Foucault's concept of power cannot explain women's complicity in their oppression because of

its inadequate account of the subject and its refusal to allow for group interests. Women presently do not have the institutional resources to overturn patriarchal ideology. The depoliticisation of equal opportunities departments ensures that they are not seen as too much of a threat. Women had unequal access to resources than men. So, to say for example, that radical feminist discourse on women's biology lies parallel to patriarchal discourse on women's biology, as Weedon (1987) describes, is impossible because the feminist discourse is not hegemonic, it does not prevail, it is seen in popular culture as extreme and lunatic, and can therefore not lie parallel to the patriarchal discourse which, using the concept of hegemony, accommodates it whilst marginalising it.

The power in leadership

Leadership emerged as an important factor in all aspects of organisational culture. A leader could encourage or discourage informal socialising both by example and by not rewarding the outcomes of it. An example of this was the way the new Cargo leader stopped the elite dinner parties for the former clique of senior men and introduced social events to which more junior managers were invited.

A leader could to a certain extent determine language and communication in their department or division, like the man who disliked swearing in Treasury operations in the bank and forbade it. A leader could encourage or discourage long hours by not doing them themselves, and not rewarding others who do them. A leader could actively promote women in their division and ensure that others did the same as did the former chief executive of the airline.

Leadership was a key influence of management style and a leader could determine and encourage styles which women felt comfortable with, as was the case in Cabin Services. Leaders are also in a position to reward women 's efforts. Many women managers in my research were looking for male leaders to support them. One powerful male leader, like Howard Davies, deputy governor of the Bank of England and a strong proponent of women's equality, can do a lot more to improve work life for women than hundreds of small, marginalised EO units in organisations, simply because they are in a position to influence the culture. One depressing factor in this research was the paucity of such men and the ignorance among so many extremely 'well educated' people. It is hard to account for leadership only using a Foucauldian concept of power - how does a subject slip into a leadership discourse and another into a subordinate discourse or are they merely constituted by these discourses? They may operate through discourses but how do they get there? Power in organisational life is not evenly distributed and some definitely have more than others, and use that power to control those without. In a number of areas the leadership factor was of paramount importance in determining aspects of the work culture. This is only possible because leaders and more senior managers have more power than other organisational members and are thus able to influence the culture, set parameters to discourses etc. This aspect of power is best illustrated by the Weberian notion of either traditional, rational-legal and charismatic power invested in authority and leadership. Power is exercised by their example and over time the establishment of norms as well as the set of punitive measures they have available. This does not mean that discourses of leadership do not exist, they do, but leaders derive their power in a more material way than a concept of discourse can give us.

Aspects of Kanter's work had resonances for my research. Some women certainly felt protected by their status as managers and senior managers from the harassment

that secretaries and other non-managerial women had to experience. Most women also subscribed to Kanter 's view of power that all it would take would be to get some women into more powerful positions and that would help change the culture. Whilst organisations are still structured along hierarchical lines, a Weberian view of power is appropriate. Leadership and the power it confers cannot be explained through a Foucauldian view.

The power in discourse

This element of Foucault's theory is useful as a tool for analysing what people may or may not be able to know or speak at a certain time. Knowledge is power, particularly in our information age, and access to certain discourses may imbue people with certain powers. But it is how and why some discourses are acceptable and why some subjects may be positioned in them and why others are not that is of key interest to feminists. In a pragmatic sense then the concept of discourse can illuminate how the cultural hegemony of dominant groups is secured and contested (Fraser 1992). Not all groups have equal authority and one task for feminist analysis is to examine how this unequal authority or power is perpetuated. It may be worth quoting Foucault again

> We must not imagine a world of discourse divided between accepted discourse and excluded discourse, or between the dominant discourse and the dominated one...(Foucault 1984 p.100)

I found evidence of dominant discourses in organisations which acted in the interests of the organisation i.e. its profitablity and sometimes in patriarchal interests too. This sets limits on discourse analysis as an explanatory concept for analysis of gender relations and indeed any hierarchical social relations.

In my research the women in the airline had a certain power in the knowledge that the organisation had a commitment to equal opportunities and they were able to use this discourse to promote some of their demands and needs. A company secretary yields a certain amount of power because they have knowledge of company law that no one else in the organisation has and cannot be disputed. Alternative discourses may be thrown up as a means of resistance but there are limits to these. In business, for example, a movement that began twenty years ago to promote ethical investment was considered extreme and remained of marginal importance to the investment community. But as voices of shareholders grew louder and governments gave guidelines for environmental concerns, this alternative discourse is now almost mainstream. It could not however overturn the primary business discourse which is capitalism and the primacy of profits. Is capitalism a discourse or a system or structure? Discourses have their limits.

The power of the human subject

In this process of analysing why women remain in inferior social positions we need a concept of human agency which if we take discourse right down to its postmodern roots rejects. A concept of human agency which acknowledges consciousness, thought processes and intention is, in my view vital for any kind of human endeavour to make sense. I accept that intentions as well as views may be partial, ill-informed or downright mistaken, yet we cannot do away with the concept of a thinking subject altogether.

As McNay notes in Foucault's work, individuals seem to occupy discursive subject positions, which appear to resemble a priori categories, in a seemingly unproblematic fashion (McNay 1994 p.77). Surely senior directors are not merely constituted by

the discourses they find themselves in, rather they have had an ambition and set goals and intended to become senior directors. If they did, then we must acknowledge agency. If one man bullies another, because he is a threat to his position, then he is an actor with intention. He intends to drive this other man out. This notion of bringing yourself to work, of McDowell's report that women sometimes felt they left their real self at home, cannot be dismissed as some kind of modernist delusion. In my research, the intention and agency behind the development of culture is harder to capture. Yes, in as much as I have evidence that certain elements of the culture are manipulated by management. Culture is created by people talking and doing things. The desire to exclude may be conscious or unconscious although history is littered with examples of purposeful exclusion of women.

We can see from the examples of power in the research that we require more than one concept of power for a thorough feminist analyis. Foucault's discourse theory is useful in showing that we can only articulate ideas and beliefs through available discourses, but I believe in extra or pre-discoursal power which ultimately set limits on discourses. Closure is a useful concept to show how a group maintains its power, closing off its resources to outside groups. Hegemony is illustrative of the ways in which a dominant group maintains power through ideological means. Power in individuals, in the psycho-dynamic sense, is important to acknowledge for a sense of agency and purpose. Not all individuals in the same social setting, within the same discourses, will use power in the same way. Patriarchy as a system of male power, is another important theory of power which I include in my analysis.

The power of the economic, of capitalism, set its own parameters on this piece of research, informing all relations of production and reproduction in both organisations. The demands of increasing profitability are relentless and this aspect

of organisational life is often not given enough attention in organisational research. However, business needs do not account for all discrimination of women in organisations. It is when patriarchal interests are threatened that men mobilise accessible resources to close off areas of work to women. I have illustrated how this mobilisation of cultural resources occurs in different ways in different parts of the organisation and I have theorised this process as patriarchal closure to exclude or marginalise women managers. I have applied some macro sociological theories with the micro world of management life to reveal and illuminate the gendered subtext of two organisational cultures at the end of the the nineteen nineties.

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APPENDIX

The appendix contains a copy of the 23 page questionnaire. The original questionnaires were all printed on high quality paper and were designed on a software package that I no longer have access to, so it cannot be altered for page numbers and margin sizes.

QUESTIONNAIRE (code number)

Dear employee

I am writing to you to take part in this survey on **organisational culture** and **women in management**, which I am undertaking as part of my Phd thesis and a report will be given to . You have been selected from a random sample of employees and the questionnaires are all anonymous . I hope you can spare a few minutes to answer the questions. Thanking you in advance.

Sarah Rutherford.

Please tick one box only unless otherwise instructed.

SECTION 1

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1. Which division do you work in ?

Cabin Crew Services	☐	1
Cargo	☐	2
HR	☐	3
Finance	☐	4
IM	☐	5
Central Marketing	☐	6
	1	

---

2. What department do you work in ? 2

---

3. What is your managerial level ?

Senior management	☐	1
Management Group	☐	2
	3	

---

4. How long have you been in your present grade? .....

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5. Sex

Male	☐	1
Female	☐	2
	5	

6. How old are you? 6

---

7. How many years have you worked for British Airways? 7

---

8. What is your highest qualification ? (please tick one)

GCSE or vocational equivalent.	☐	1
'A' level or equivalent	☐	2
Post -18 qualification.	☐	3
Degree	☐	4
Post graduate	☐	5
	8	

---

9. Do you work :

Full time (over 35 hours per week)	☐	1
Part time	☐	2
	9	

---

10. At work do you have immediate dealings with:

Women only	☐	1
Men only	☐	2
Both men and women	☐	3
	10	

---

11. Are you:

Married	☐	1
Living with a partner	☐	2
Divorced/separated	☐	3
Widowed	☐	4
Single	☐	5
	11	

---

12. Is your salary the principal or secondary income?

Principal	☐	1
Secondary	☐	2
Equal	☐	3
	12	

12. Do you have children?

YES	☐	1
NO	☐	2

---

13. If YES, How many ? 13

---

14. And , What ages? 14

---

15. What has been the progress of your career?

Excellent	☐	1
Mediocre	☐	2
Not as fast as I'd have hoped for	☐	3
	15	

---

16. How do you anticipate that your career will progress now?

Promotion within current organisation	☐	1
Promotion with another organisation	☐	2
Sideways within organisation	☐	3
Sideways with another organisation	☐	4
	16	

---

17. Have you encountered any barriers in your career to date? (Tick as applicable)

Inflexible working patterns	☐	1
Lack of training provision	☐	2
Family commitments	☐	3
Lack of adequate childcare	☐	4
Lack of personal motivation /confidence	☐	5
Lack of career guidance	☐	6
Prejudice of colleagues	☐	7
Sexual discrimination /harrassment	☐	8
Old boy network	☐	9
	17	

SECTION 2

18. How many hours a day do you work , on average? ..... ☐ 1
18

19. Do you ever take work home?

YES ☐ 1
NO ☐ 2

20. If YES, how often?

Once a month ☐ 1
Twice a month ☐ 2
Once a week ☐ 3
2-3 times a week ☐ 4
20

21. Are meetings ever held after official work hours?

YES ☐ 1
NO ☐ 2
21

22. Are you content with the amount of hours you work?

YES ☐ 1
NO ☐ 2
22

23. Is there any option available to you to work shorter hours?

YES ☐ 1
NO ☐ 2
23

24. What is the primary reason for working long hours? (tick one)

Pressure from top management	☐	1
Workplace culture	☐	2
Own desire for advancement	☐	3
Workload requires it	☐	4
	24	

---

25. Does the amount of hours you work infringe on your home /personal life?

YES	☐	1
NO	☐	2
	25	

---

26. Have you ever had to take time off for work related stress symptoms?

YES	☐	1
NO	☐	2
	26	

IF YOU HAVE ALWAYS WORKED FULL TIME PLEASE GO TO QUESTION 32.

***PART TIME WORK - FOR THOSE WHO EITHER HAVE WORKED PART TIME OR WHO ARE CURRENTLY WORKING PART TIME.**

27. What affect does/did working part time have on your career?

Positive	☐	1
Negative	☐	2
No effect	☐	3
	27	

---

28. Please state your part time work arrangement(eg two days per work):

..... 28

---

29. If you are still working part time do you intend to return to full time work?

YES	☐	1
NO	☐	2
N/A	☐	3
	29	

30. Do you ever do more than your formal hours?

YES	☐	1
NO	☐	2
	30	

---

31. If YES, how often?

Once a month	☐	1
Twice a month	☐	2
Once a week	☐	3
Two to three times a week	☐	4
	31	

---

32. Have you taken maternity leave within British Airways?

YES	☐	1
NO	☐	2
	32	

IF NO, PLEASE GO TO QUESTION 37

---

33. How much time did you take off? 33

---

34. Did you return to full time or part time work?

Full time	☐	1
Part time	☐	2
	34	

---

35. Did you return to your same job?

YES	☐	1
NO	☐	2
	35	

---

36. Are you content with the maternity leave you took?

YES	☐	1
NO	☐	2
	36	

IF NO, PLEASE STATE REASONS .....

.....

SECTION 3

37. Is your work environment accomodating of your home life?

YES	☐	1
NO	☐	2
	37	

38. Can you discuss any personal difficulties with your superiors?

YES	☐	1
NO	☐	2
Some of them	☐	3
N/A	☐	4
	38	

39. Can you discuss personal difficulties with your colleagues?

YES	☐	1
NO	☐	2
Some of them	☐	3
	39	

40. **Can you take time off for domestic commitments?**

YES	☐	1
YES, with difficulty	☐	2
NO	☐	3
N/A	☐	4
	40	

---

41. **When was the last time you took time off to meet a domestic responsibility ?**

In the last week	☐	1
In the last month	☐	2
In the past six months	☐	3
In the past year	☐	4
Never	☐	5
	41	

---

42. **Does time off for a family event eg school play come out of holiday entitlement?**

YES	☐	1
NO	☐	2
	42	

---

43. **Is commitment to the organisation an important requisite of your job?**

YES	☐	1
NO	☐	2
	43	

---

44. **How is commitment to British Airways measured?**

Working long hours	☐	1
Completing tasks with energy and enthusiasm	☐	2
	44	

---

45. **Are you aware of British Airways' corporate values?**

YES	☐	1
NO	☐	2
	45	

46. If YES, do you agree with them ?

YES	☐	1
NO	☐	2
Some of them	☐	3
	46	

---

47. As a manager, is your reaction to the Leadership 2000 campaign

Positive	☐	1
Negative	☐	2
Neutral	☐	3
	47	

---

48. Who takes main domestic responsibility at home?

Me	☐	1
My partner	☐	2
	48	

---

49. Is there a conflict in demands of home and work?

YES	☐	1
NO	☐	2
	49	

---

50. Does your organisation value work skills gained in the home?

YES	☐	1
NO	☐	2
	50	

---

51. Do you, as a manager, value work skills gained in the home?

YES	☐	1
NO	☐	2
	51	

52. What is the overall attitude to women with children working full time from others within your own organisation?

Positive	☐	1
Neutral	☐	2
Negative	☐	3
	52	

---

53. What is the overall attitude to women with children working full time from others within your own department :

Positive	☐	1
Neutral	☐	2
Negative	☐	3
	53	

---

54. What is your attitude to women with children working full time?

Positive	☐	1
Adequate	☐	2
Negative	☐	3
	54	

SECTION 4

55. How would you best describe the way your department runs? (Tick only one)

Motivation comes from top person	☐	1
Everyone does their job according to their ascribed role	☐	2
Runs on teams with particular task to do	☐	3
Runs on expectation that each person works to their best potential.	☐	4
	55	

56. Which work attributes are most rewarded? (Tick only one)

Good relationship with senior person and politically aware risk taking	☐	1
Commitment and loyalty to the organisation	☐	2
Being part of hard working team, committed to getting work done.	☐	3
Individual performance and commitment to development of individual talents.	☐	4
	56	

---

57. Is the department dominated by a strong leader?

YES	☐	1
NO	☐	2
	57	

---

58. Is management in your department:

Hierarchical	☐	1
Non hierarchical	☐	2
	58	

---

59. Are attendance to rules important in your department?

YES	☐	1
NO	☐	2
	59	

---

60. Do you have relative autonomy in the way you manage your work?

YES	☐	1
NO	☐	2
	60	

---

61. Do you feel any personal allegiance to your department per se?

YES	☐	1
NO	☐	2
	61	

62. Is the decision-making process in your department

Too slow	☐	1
Too fast	☐	2
Just right	☐	3
	62	

---

63. Are decisions ever taken informally?

YES	☐	1
NO	☐	2
	63	

---

64. Do you ever feel excluded in the decision making process?

YES	☐	1
NO	☐	2
	64	

---

65. Is there a formal format for discussion of work problems?

YES	☐	1
NO	☐	2
	65	

---

66. Do you ever think you are not being listened to?

YES	☐	1
NO	☐	2
	66	

---

67 Do you consider communication between employees in your department to be:

Very good	☐	1
Good	☐	2
Adequate	☐	3
Bad	☐	4
Very bad	☐	5
	67	

68 **How do people communicate? (Tick as appropriate)**

By E-mail	☐	1
Memos	☐	2
Telephone	☐	3
Face to face	☐	4
At meetings	☐	5
	68	

---

69 **What skills are required for your job? (Tick as appropriate)**

Listening well	☐	1
Decision-making	☐	2
Ability to motivate others	☐	3
Ability to discipline	☐	4
	69	

---

70 **Can you freely express emotions to the relevent people in your department?**

YES	☐	1
NO	☐	2
	70	

---

71. **What kinds of emotions are displayed in your department? (Tick as appropriate)**

Anger	☐	1
Sadness	☐	2
Love	☐	3
Anxiety	☐	4
Excitement	☐	5
	71	

---

72. **Do you think that women manage differently from men?**

YES	☐	1
NO	☐	2
	72	

---

73. **If YES, please state in which ways** .....

.....

73

74. What effect do you think that women managers have on the workplace?

Positive	☐	1
Negative	☐	2
No effect	☐	3
	74	

---

75. Is your immediate superior male or female?

Male	☐	1
Female	☐	2
N/A	☐	3
	75	

---

76. If you could choose, would you prefer a male or female boss?

Male	☐	1
Female	☐	2
	76	

---

77. Do you have a secretary?

YES	☐	1
NO	☐	2
	77	

---

78. Are secretaries and women managers treated in the same way in your department?

YES	☐	1
NO	☐	2
	78	

---

79. If NO, please state in what ways they differ.

.....

.....

79

SECTION 5 - LANGUAGE

80. Does your everyday organisational language contain technical jargon?

YES	☐	1
NO	☐	2
	80	

---

81. Do you find it:

Helpful	☐	1
Offputting	☐	2
	81	

---

82. Does the workplace language contain:

a) sexual metaphors

YES	☐	1
NO	☐	2

b) Sports metaphors eg (he ran a good race, first to the line, kicked into touch)

YES	☐	3
NO	☐	4

c) War metaphors

YES	☐	5
NO	☐	6

d) Chess metaphors

YES	☐	7
NO	☐	8
	82	

---

83. Is swearing acceptable in the office?

YES	☐	1
NO	☐	2
Sometimes	☐	3
	83	

84. If YES, does it offend you?

YES	☐	1
NO	☐	2
	84	

---

85. How would you describe everyday language in the office?

Informal	☐	1
Formal	☐	2
	85	

SECTION 6

86. Do you mix with colleagues in an informal social way?

YES	☐	1
NO	☐	2
	86	

---

87. On what kind of occasions?

Lunches	☐	1
Drinks after work	☐	2
Dinner	☐	3
Sports	☐	4
Other (please state)	☐	5
	87	

---

88. How important to your career is informal socialising with colleagues?

Very important	☐	1
Important	☐	2
Not important	☐	3
	88	

89. Do you mix with clients in an informal social way?

YES	☐	1
NO	☐	2
N/A	☐	3
	89	

---

90. On what kind of occasions?

Lunches	☐	1
Drinks after work	☐	2
Dinner	☐	3
Sports	☐	4
Other (please state)	☐	5
	90	

---

91. How important to your career is mixing informally with clients?

Very important	☐	1
Important	☐	2
Not important	☐	3
N/A	☐	4
	91	

---

92. Are there any aspects of informal socialising that you dislike?

Drinking	☐	1
Sports activities	☐	2
Encroaches on home life	☐	3
Other (Please state)	☐	4
	92	

---

93. Do domestic responsibilities constrain the amount of informal socialising you can do?

YES	☐	1
NO	☐	2
	93	

Mentoring is a term to describe a relationship in which a senior member of an organisation takes under their wing a more junior member and helps them in their career .

94. Does mentoring exist in your area of work?

YES	☐	1
NO	☐	2
	94	

---

95. Has your career been helped by a mentor?

YES	☐	1
NO	☐	2
	95	

---

96. How important is/has networking been to your career?

Very important	☐	1
Important	☐	2
No effect	☐	3
	96	

---

97. Do you belong to any private clubs (outside the organisation)?

YES	☐	1
NO	☐	2
	97	

---

98. If YES, what kind of clubs (please tick as appropriate):

Sports	☐	1
Lunch	☐	2
Social	☐	3
Dining	☐	4
Old school club	☐	5
Other (Please state)	☐	6
	98	

99. Are any of the clubs you belong to single sex?

YES	☐	1
NO	☐	2
	99	

---

100. Does the membership of any of these clubs, single or mixed sex, help in networking and making business contacts?

YES	☐	1
NO	☐	2
	100	

SECTION SEVEN

101. Does the humour displayed in your department have a sexual content?

YES	☐	1
NO	☐	2
	101	

---

102. Is there a presumption of heterosexuality in your department?

YES	☐	1
NO	☐	2
	102	

---

103. Has there been any incidence of sexual harassment that you know of in your organisation?

YES	☐	1
NO	☐	2
	103	

---

104. Have you ever been on the receiving end of sexually offensive behaviour?

YES	☐	1
NO	☐	2
	104	

105. Has this occurred:

Once	☐	1
More than once	☐	2
All the time	☐	3
	105	

---

106. Did you report it?

YES	☐	1
NO	☐	2
	106	

---

107. Are comments ever made on people's appearance?

YES	☐	1
NO	☐	2
	107	

---

108. Are comments ever made on your appearance which cause irritation?

YES	☐	1
NO	☐	2
	108	

---

109. Do you ever dress for work so as to avoid attracting sexual attention?

YES	☐	1
NO	☐	2
	109	

SECTION EIGHT

110. Would you describe the relations between men and women in your department as:

Excellent	☐	1
Good	☐	2
Mediocre	☐	3
Bad	☐	4
Very bad	☐	5
	110	

---

111. Are you aware of an equal opportunities policy in your organisation?

YES	☐	1
NO	☐	2
	111	

---

112. Have you ever felt excluded from a certain job because of your gender?

YES	☐	1
NO	☐	2
	112	

---

113. Have you ever felt excluded from a certain job because of your sexuality?

YES	☐	1
NO	☐	2
	113	

---

114. Have you ever experienced any hostility in your work because of your gender?

YES	☐	1
NO	☐	2
	114	

115. Have you ever felt unwelcome in an area of the organisation because of your gender?

YES	☐	1
NO	☐	2
	115	

---

116. Is [redacted] doing enough to create a culture which nurtures and encourages women to pursue their chosen careers?

YES	☐	1
NO	☐	2
	116	

---

117. If NO, what do you think it could change? (Please state)

.....

..... 117

End - Thank you for participating in the questionnaire.